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VI. THE NAVAL QUARANTINE

524. Of the four principal aspects to the U.S. military response to the 1962 Cuban crisis, the one that was pivotal was the actual imposition of a naval quarantine. Since preparations for more drastic military measures are analyzed in other sections of this study, this Chapter will focus solely on the naval quarantine. The purpose will be to examine the quarantine operations retrospectively, in order to determine the nature of the problems encountered at the higher levels of military decision making as they affected and were dealt with by the JCS.

525. Throughout the crisis the different aspects of the U.S. military response required many decisions and actions which necessarily took into account the reciprocal impact of any one aspect on the others. Discussion of these interrelationships insofar as they affected command and control, however, can best be accomplished elsewhere in this analysis and therefore will not be included here. (See Ch. V and VII.)

526. Similarly, in addition to being influenced by purely military considerations, day-by-day decisions concerning the conduct of quarantine operations also were directly responsive to concurrent developments in the international political arena. Available data permit only a sketchy examination of the interface between the quarantine operation itself and these political developments. Despite the limitations, an attempt will nevertheless be made tentatively to relate these two phenomena. It is essential to bear in mind that the findings of this portion of the analysis are conditional. Information not presently available might qualify or cast additional light on the interplay between international political developments and military decision relating to the quarantine as this interplay evolved during the crisis.

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A. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING FOR THE QUARANTINE

527. Operation plans for a military blockade of Cuba had existed prior to the 1962 crisis. However, these had been predicated upon a total air and sea blockade of the island in the context of a confrontation with the Castro regime.¹ Although these plans anticipated the possibility of USSR support of Castro, they were not intended for a contingency in which the major parties to the conflict were the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

528. Plans for the far more limited quarantine which actually was carried out were ad hoc and emerged after the crisis began. They were developed during the critical week of national decision making which followed the initial receipt, on 14 October, of the photographic evidence that the Soviets were in the process of establishing IRBM, MRBM, and IL-28 bases in Cuba.

529. The decision to maintain tight security until more reconnaissance photographs could be obtained and evaluated -- and an appropriate course of action decided upon by the President -- drastically limited the number of persons informed about the new developments prior to 19 October.

530. Various alternative courses of action were discussed earlier by the small group of high-ranking officials which the President quickly had organized into an Executive Committee of the National Security Council to serve as his principal advisors. This Executive Committee, whose sole military member was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (the Secretary of Defense and the Deputy Secretary of Defense also served on the committee), relied, in turn, on a small, select group of policy planners for assistance.

¹Further details may be found in Chapter II of this Enclosure, "Pre-Crisis Military Contingency Planning."

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531. From 17 October onward¹ in the NSC Executive Committee and its subsidiary advisory groups, thinking focused increasingly on a limited naval blockade of Cuba as a first step in the U.S. response. However, although the President himself seemed to be moving towards a decision to impose a limited blockade, he had not ruled out entirely other possible courses of action.

532. On 19 October, before leaving Washington to keep previously scheduled and widely publicized speaking engagements which could not be cancelled without compromising secrecy, the President met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of State.¹ Although what transpired at this meeting has not been disclosed, preparations for implementing a limited naval blockade, if so directed, increased significantly immediately thereafter within the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) and, to a lesser extent, within the JCS organization.

533. The exact time and circumstances under which the CNO was designated to act as the representative of the JCS on matters pertaining to the blockade and the defense of Guantanamo are ambiguous. The arrangement seems to have evolved de facto, gradually emerging over a period of several days prior to 21 October.²

¹ Anonymous, "Chronology of the Cuban Crisis: October 15-28, 1962," UNCLASSIFIED. This chronology utilizes information furnished by the Press Officers of the White House, the Department of Defense, and the State Department. Presumably, it was prepared in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

² The first two explicit documentary references to the role of the CNO as the agent of the JCS on blockade matters uncovered during this study were dated 20 and 21 October, respectively. On 20 October, in reply to the questions posed by the Deputy Secretary of Defense the previous day, the JCS reminded the Deputy Secretary that "...the whole blockade program has been assigned to Admiral Anderson /CNO/ by the Secretary of Defense." (JCSN-790-62 20 October 1962, TOP SECRET.) Since this was the case, the memorandum continued, the JCS had refrained from replying to those of the Deputy Secretary's questions which related to rules of engagement, concept of operations, etc., for a potential blockade. (Ibid.) In another memorandum dated 21 October, the CNO's executive officer referred to the designation of the CNO as JCS 'representative' for the naval blockade and the defense of Guantanamo and outlined procedures designed to ensure coordination between various officials and agencies, including the JCS, which were involved in policy decisions concerning the blockade. (OP-00 Memo 00092/62, from Exec/CNO to distribution, TOP SECRET.) Staff officers within J-3 who were assigned duties relating to the blockade were not informed of the circumstances under which the CNO was designated to serve as the JCS representative. (Interviews with J-3 personnel.)

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534. The day of the White House meeting in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff participated (19 October), the Secretary of Defense apparently requested that the CNO develop rules of engagement and detailed operational concepts for a limited naval blockade.¹ Presumably, policy guidelines for the blockade concept were coordinated by OPNAV through the Deputy Secretary of Defense with the work on legal aspects of a blockade which had been under way within the Departments of Justice and State since the previous evening (18 October).² About the same time, the Deputy Secretary of Defense requested the views of the JCS on several matters relating to a potential blockade of Cuba, including rules of engagement, the materiel to be included in the list of prohibited items, and the capabilities of Latin American nations to assist in execution of the plan.³

535. The following day (20 October), the JCS transmitted its opinions on some of the questions raised by the Deputy Secretary of Defense. For example, an estimate of the probable availability of Latin American naval resources for participation in a blockade was furnished. However, the Joint Chiefs of Staff refrained, at this time, from commenting formally on either the rules of engagement or detailed operational concepts for the blockade. Under the procedural arrangements which were evolving, the primary planning responsibilities in this area already had been delegated to the CNO by the Secretary of Defense. Proposed rules of engagement, operational concepts, and other planning papers related to the blockade had been drafted during the night of the 19th within OPNAV. These apparently were scrutinized by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the morning of 20 October.⁴

¹JCSM-799-62, 20 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²CNO Flag Plot Cuban Watch Log, 19 October 1962, *passim*, TOP SECRET; New York Times, 6 November 1962, UNCLASSIFIED.

³JCS 2304/74, 20 October 1962, pp. 530-537, inclusive, TOP SECRET, RESTRICTED DATA.

⁴Ibid.; JCSM-799-62, op. cit.

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536. Meanwhile, within the JCS organization, and particularly within J-3, substantive and procedural preparations relating to the potential imposition of a limited naval blockade also had been accelerated.

537. At the request of the Chairman, JCS, on 19 October the Director, J-3, had established a special blockade group composed of three officers. This group, headed by Captain D. L. Moody, USN, was assigned primary responsibility for:

- a. Maintaining liaison with the office of the CNO;
- b. Coordinating with the Director and Deputy Directors of J-3 on blockade matters, and
- c. Insuring that the flow of information on blockade developments to the Office of the Chairman, to the JCS, and to the Director, Joint Staff was both adequate and timely.¹

Because of the special security measures still being maintained and the heavy workload of all J-3 personnel assigned to Cuba-connected activities, there was, at this time, no formal coordination between the blockade group and either Current Actions Center watch personnel or those designated to become members of the Joint D Title Staff teams who were beginning to be alerted.²

538. Within the CNO Flag Plot, a special Cuba watch team also was activated on 19 October, at 1600 EDT. The CNO Flag Plot watch was instructed that when policy decisions were required on matters pertaining to the planning for the potential naval blockade of Cuba or the defense of Guantanamo, these were to be referred to the CNO, the Vice-CNO, the Deputy CNO for Plans and Policy, or the Deputy CNO for Fleet Operations and Readiness.³ These flag officers formed the nucleus of a Policy Watch which was on duty around-the-clock throughout the crisis.

¹Memorandum for General Taylor from Major General Unger, 20 October 1962, SECRET; Memorandum for Director, J-3, et al; from Military Secretary, J-3, "Quarantine Operations," 25 October 1962, SECRET; interviews with J-3 personnel.

²Ibid.

³CNO Flag Plot Log, passim; TOP SECRET; OP-00 Memorandum 00092/62, 21 October 1962, TOP SECRET. Further details on the role of CNO Flag Plot during the crisis may be found in Appendix B to Enclosure D of this analysis.

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539. By 1430 EDT, on 20 October, the President was back in Washington, having cancelled the remainder of his campaign trip. A cover story for the press had claimed he was ill with a cold. The NSC Executive Committee, augmented, was in session at the White House. During this session, the President decided to institute the limited naval blockade of Cuba -- which he later termed a "quarantine" -- as quickly as possible, taking account of the necessity to notify Allies and to permit completion of the military preparations. The time for a public announcement by the President of the United States' intentions was tentatively set for 1900 EDT, on Monday 22 October.¹

540. Meanwhile, the special J-3 blockade group had been in frequent contact with CNO Flag Plot and other OPNAV Cuban action groups. Staff work related to planning for the quarantine again continued throughout the night. Within OPNAV, revised rules of engagement were drafted. The J-3 blockade group, assisted by other duty officers, prepared for the Director, J-3, a checklist of items requiring JCS consideration. Draft texts of messages were appended to this checklist. These draft messages were intended to furnish in advance the basis for the messages which would have to be transmitted as actions were approved and implemented.²

541. On Sunday, 21 October, the Joint Battle Staff was activated. Arrangements for representatives of the National Security Agency to be on duty in the Current Actions Center (CAC) on a 24-hour

¹"Chronology of the Cuban Crisis...", op.cit., page 5.

²Ultimately, this checklist was termed the J-3 MCL. Because of other demands on the blockade group, responsibility for its preparation subsequently was reassigned. (Memorandum, "Responsibilities for Preparation of Daily Master Checklist for Cuban Operations," dated 23 October 1962, from Brigadier General E. H. Burba to other Deputy Directors, J-3, and to Chiefs, Operations Plans, General Operations and current Operations Divisions, J-3, SECRET.) For a detailed discussion of the development and preparation of the Master Checklist (MCL), see Enclosure B of this study, "Procedural Analysis of J-3 Command and Control Operations."

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basis had been completed. Similar arrangements for the assignment of State Department staff members to duty in the CAC were in process. The Office of the CNO outlined in detail formal procedures for ensuring coordination between OPNAV and the JCS organization.¹ Ad hoc procedures had evolved for effecting inter-departmental decisions and coordination on policy papers pertaining to the blockade and other crisis matters. The White House, the Office of the Secretary of State, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations were utilizing a special courier service to accomplish whatever policy coordination was required during periods when the Executive Committee of the NSC and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were not in session.

B. ALERTING THE QUARANTINE FORCE

542. Presumably, CINCLANT had been kept informed of major developments in Washington throughout the critical week of national decision making. However, available data do not reflect in any detail what role, if any, CINCLANT played in the operational planning for the quarantine.

543. On the afternoon of 21 October, the CNO, in his capacity as JCS representative for quarantine operations and the defense of Guantanamo, issued to LANTCC the first in a series of exclusive Cuba contingency SITREPS. Shortly thereafter, CINCLANT, in his capacity as CINCLANTFLT, directed COMSECONDFLT, in his capacity as blockade commander, to submit four-hour SITREPS if operations were initiated. The same message informed the blockade commander that

¹ Apparently, some of these procedures were not implemented immediately. Coordination between the Joint Battle Staff Teams and the CNO Flag Plot Watch continued to be somewhat sporadic until at least 24 October. Throughout the crisis, the special J-3 blockade group served as the principal J-3 liaison with OPNAV. (Memorandum: "Quarantine Operations," from Military Secretary, J-3 to Director, J-3 Battle Staff Chief /sic/; Quarantine Watch; Operations Support, NMCC; EA Team, NMCC; dated 25 October 1962, SECRET.)

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the probable first target at the quarantine line was the Soviet merchant ship POLTAVA, expected on 29 October.¹

544. About the same time, an exclusive message personally drafted by the Chairman, JCS, was transmitted to all the CINCS and to LANTCOM component commanders. General Taylor's message reported that:

a. The President was considering the establishment of a blockade of Cuba;

b. DEFCON 3 would be established worldwide effective at the time a public announcement of U.S. intentions was made;

c. This announcement was tentatively scheduled for the evening of 22 October, D.C. time; and

d. The tentative time for initiation of blockade operations would be somewhere between 24 and 48 hours later.

Addressees were cautioned that this information was extremely sensitive and were directed to hold it closely.² The CINCS earlier had received hints, and even a formal warning, that military action against Cuba was under consideration. Reinforcements had begun to arrive at Guantanamo in phased tactical groups as early as 19 October. Two days previously, CINCONAD had been directed to augment the air defenses of the southeastern U.S. immediately. However, this message was the first from the JCS to alert the CINCS to the fact that the national decision makers were moving towards the imposition of a blockade as the initial military move.

545. Shortly after the Chairman's exclusive warning message concerning the blockade had been dispatched, the President again met in the White House with the National Security Council. The CNO participated in this meeting. Progress reports were given on

¹CNO Message to CINCLANT and LANTCOM Component Commanders, Exclusive, DTG 211713Z October, TOP SECRET; CINCLANTFLT Message to COMSECONDFLT, DTG 211806Z October, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Message 6830, Exclusive, DTG 211841Z October, TOP SECRET.

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preparations for the blockade, and the third draft of the President's speech was discussed. It was decided at this NSC session that, although the first U.S. objective would be to block further shipments of Soviet offensive military equipment to Cuba, it also was essential to insure that the Soviet missiles already in Cuba be removed under U.N. supervision and inspection.¹ At 2200 EDT the Secretary of Defense approved the concept of operations and the rules of engagement for the quarantine.²

546. The detailed policy guidance approved by the Secretary of Defense on the evening of 21 October was not formally transmitted to CINCLANT by the JCS until about seven o'clock the following morning, Washington time. Apparently, the final draft of the message containing this guidance had been prepared during the night, primarily within OPNAV. If its transmittal was prefaced by any earlier communications between the CNO, in his role as JCS representative for naval quarantine operations, and CINCLANT, this fact is not reflected in available data. Nor do these data show any evidence of communications, during the night between key deputies of the CNO and CINCLANT.³

547. Irrespective of the extent of communication between these echelons which took place after the Secretary of Defense had approved the concept of operations and the rules of engagement late in the evening of 21 October, approximately two hours earlier, at 2026 EDT, CINCLANT, acting in his capacity as CINCLANTFLT, had issued his initial OP order concerning a limited naval blockade of Cuba.⁴ The OP order was effective for planning on receipt and for

¹"Chronology of the Cuban Crisis...", op.cit., p. 6.

²Ibid.

³Neither the CNO Flag Plot Log entries covering this period nor the message traffic examined shows any evidence of communication between OPNAV and LANTCOM during the night at any time after 2200 EDT, the hour when the quarantine concept of operations and rules of engagement were approved by the Secretary of Defense. However, no complete record of secure voice link traffic was released to the authors of this study.

⁴CINCLANTFLT OP Order 45-62 to COMSECONDFLT, COMASWFORLANT, COMOPTEVFOR, and CONTRALANT, info to CINCLANT, CNO, JCS and CINCARIB. Transmitted as CINCLANTFLT message DTG 220026Z October, TOP SECRET.

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execution when directed. It established a blockade force, designated as Task Force 136 (TF 136), under the command of COMSECONDFLT in the NEWPORT NEWS. COMSECONDFLT was directed to designate COMCRUDESFLT 6 in the CANBERRA as the surface quarantine group commander. The OP order also directed certain other CINCLANTFLT component commanders to "CHOP" (change operational control of) snips required for the blockade operations to COMSECONDFLT. COMASWFORLANT was directed to conduct air surveillance as requested by the blockade commander. Direct liaison was authorized among the various LANTFLT commands involved, with CINCLANTFLT to be kept informed. The commander of the blockade force was directed to submit contact reports with flash precedence and to make amplifying reports of significant interception/visit and search developments by OP immediate message, addressed for action to CINCLANTFLT, with info copies to CHO, CINCLANT, and JCS. The blockade commander was also directed to submit SITREP's every four hours to the same addressees. It was noted that "no-change" (i.e., negative) SITREP's also were required. The OP order also stated that Russian interpreters were to be provided by BuPers.¹

C. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

548. The concept of operations and rules of engagement contained in the original CINCLANTFLT OP order to the blockade task force were essentially the same as those contained in the instructions subsequently transmitted to CINCLANT by the JCS. However, slightly less emphasis was placed on keeping the use of force to the absolute minimum. The original OP order did not allude to the possibility of the participation of the vessels of Allied or friendly nations in the blockade operation. The potential extension of the

¹ CINCLANTFLT OP Order 45-62 to COMSECONDFLT, COMASWFORLANT, COMOPTEVFOR, and COMTRALANT. Transmitted as CINCLANTFLT Message DTG 220026Z October, TOP SECRET.

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blockade to include measures to prevent the importation of prohibited material into Cuba by airlift, as well as by sealift, was not mentioned. COMSECONDFLT, as commander of TF 136, was authorized to make such tactical decisions as designating the ships to be intercepted, naming the U.S. ports to which uncooperative ships suspected of carrying prohibited materiel were to be diverted, and determining which intercepted ships were to be boarded and searched. These standard command arrangements were soon to be modified significantly. [In addition, the list of prohibited materiel contained in the initial CINCLANTFLT OP order included both POL and "fuel and lubricants for offensive systems," neither of which was mentioned in the later JCS message.¹]

549. Early on the morning of 22 October, the JCS transmitted to CINCLANT the basic blockade message and virtual operational plan which, with some subsequent modifications, was to serve as CINCLANT's fundamental policy guidance for conduct of the quarantine. The message had been prepared primarily within the Office of the CNO, who was acting as JCS representative for quarantine operations, and had been approved by the Secretary of Defense. The message still referred throughout to a "blockade"; subsequently the terminology was to be modified to conform to the President's use of the term "quarantine."

550. Salient points in the message were:

a. General Concept of Operations The blockade would include maximum use of all available assets for collecting, reporting and

[CINCLANTFLT OP Order 45-52, on.cit. The inclusion of POL in the original CINCLANTFLT OP order was discovered about 1330 EDT on 23 October by an officer assigned to the Joint Battle Staff watch in the NMCC. This discrepancy between CINCLANTFLT's OP order and the list contained in JCS message 6848 was brought to the attention of a Deputy Director, J-3, who directed OPAV to see that POL was deleted. (Memorandum for the record, dated 23 October 1962, TOP SECRET, in the J-3 Cuba Joint Battle Staff files.) Meanwhile, CINCLANTFLT, after receipt of JCS message 6848, had already issued a revised OP order the previous day which deleted both POL and other "fuel and lubricants for offensive systems" from the list of prohibited materials. The omission of an explicit reference to missile propellants in the list of prohibited materials prepared in Washington was not discovered until later.]

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interpreting intelligence concerning merchant ships and aircraft¹ which might be carrying prohibited materiel to Cuba.² Naval operations by intercepting ships were to be carried out in such a manner that the normal positions of these ships would be outside the effective intercept range of enemy aircraft known to be operational from established Cuban bases. Should Allied or friendly nations offer assistance in enforcing the quarantine, U.S. forces would cooperate fully with the forces of nations rendering such assistance.

b. Prohibited Materiel: The original JCS message included the following: patrol craft, motor torpedo boats or other craft with armament provisions, and their armament, including surface-to-surface missiles and torpedoes; bomber and fighter-bomber aircraft; bombs, air-to-surface rockets and guided missiles; warheads for any of the above weapons; mechanical or electronic equipment to support or operate the above items; and any other items hereafter designated by the Secretary of Defense.

c. Rules of Engagement:

(1)

¹At this time, the possibility of an air quarantine still was being considered, and in addition to detailed policy guidance concerning the establishment of the limited naval blockade, the message included guidelines which would apply should the quarantine be extended to include Soviet aircraft. However, the JCS noted that, according to intelligence indicators, most of the prohibited materiel being imported into Cuba was being carried in Communist Bloc ships. Although CINCLANT was instructed to develop plans for a blockade of aircraft, these were to be executed only upon the direction of higher headquarters.

²As the crisis unfolded, intelligence information on the movements and cargoes of foreign ships indeed was collected and utilized in a variety of ways. However, the data on which this study is based were insufficient to permit a full analysis of the impact of such operational intelligence on quarantine decision-making processes. Therefore, this facet of the quarantine will, of necessity, be examined only cursorily.]

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d. Defense of Guantanamo: Upon receipt of the message and prior to the imposition of the blockade, CINCLANT was directed to evacuate dependents and to reinforce Guantanamo. In addition, detailed instructions were given concerning the defense of Guantanamo and the ships and aircraft approaching and leaving the base. Specific rules of engagement were spelled out in detail.

Photoreconnaissance and other intelligence information indicated that at least twelve Soviet patrol boats of this class were operating from Cuban bases by mid-October. They were manned by Soviet crews, and each carried two missiles estimated to have a line-of-sight range of 10-12 n.mi., with each missile capable of carrying a 2,000-pound HE warhead. The KOMAR-class PGM is not estimated to be capable of reloading its missile tubes at sea. (LANTCOM, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, "CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)," 29 April 1963, TOP SECRET, page 7.)

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e. Control and Protection of U.S. Merchant Ships:

Coincident with establishment of the blockade, CINCLANT was instructed to institute protection for U.S. shipping in the Florida straits, the Yucatan Channel and the Windward Passage.¹ Air cover and surface forces were to be utilized as required. CINCLANT was informed that it was undesirable to institute a formal control of U.S. merchant shipping. However, he was authorized to advise ships' masters on preferred routings if he felt that this was desirable to maintain economic use of the forces assigned to the mission.

f.

g. Reportage: The JCS stressed that prompt reports to higher authority on all incidents were absolutely essential.²

551. After receipt of this detailed guidance, CINCLANT, on 22 October, recommended several modifications of the rules of engagement to the JCS. These related primarily to tactical matters concerning the conduct of operations, and were still under review that evening.

¹Earlier on the 22nd, CINCLANT had informed the JCS that CINCLANT had delegated to COMWESTFOR responsibility for protecting U.S. shipping in the Florida Straits and the Yucatan Channel against possible Cuban attack in response to the imposition of a blockade. COMCARIBSEAFRON was to assume responsibility for protection of shipping in the Windward Passage and for furnishing escort for the ships carrying dependents evacuated from Guantanamo back to the U.S. (CINCLANT Message to JCS, DTG 220342Z October, TOP SECRET.)

²JCS Message 6848, DTG 221111Z October, to CINCLANT et al., TOP SECRET.

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552. Meanwhile, as will be recalled, CINCLANT, acting in his capacity as CINCLANTFLT, already had alerted COMSECONDFLT to prepare to command the principal naval quarantine task force (TF 136) when directed.¹ Within LANTCOM, therefore, COMSECONDFLT was finalizing and coordinating his plans for carrying out this assignment.

D. COMPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPAL QUARANTINE TASK FORCE (TF 136)

553. According to the concept of operations for TF 136 developed by CINCLANTFLT and COMSECONDFLT, who was to command the task force, TF 136's internal organizational structure and chain of command were to follow established Navy procedures.² Within the Task Force, there were to be three task groups, each with its own commander subordinate to COMSECONDFLT.³

554. One of these task groups, responsible for surface patrol and interceptor, would be designated TG 136.1⁴ and would be

¹CINCLANTFLT OP Order 45-62 to COMSECONDFLT, et al., DTG 220026Z October, TOP SECRET, op.cit.

²These procedures provide for blocks of task force numbers to be allocated to Fleet Commanders in accordance with their needs. When establishing a task force, a Fleet Commander designates the Task Force Commander and assigns specific ships and aircraft to the task force.

The Task Force Commander and his subordinate commanders then may further subdivide the task force as required by its size and the complexity of its mission. The subdivisions which may be made within a task force, listed in descending order of command echelons, are: task groups, task units, and task elements. At each command echelon within the task force, a maximum of ten subdivisions into the next lowest command echelon is permissible.

³CTF 136 OPORD 1-62, transmitted as COMSECONDFLT Message DTG 221640Z October to COMCRUDESFLT 6, COMCARDIV 18, COMDESRON 16, et al.; information copies CINCLANTFLT, CINCLANT, CNO, et al. TOP SECRET, effective for planning upon receipt and for execution when directed.

⁴Standard Navy procedures include the use of a decimal designation system to identify the various components of a task force. Under this arrangement, a specific number is assigned to each subdivision of the Task Force at each command echelon. The task group number appears immediately after the Task Force number and is separated from it by a decimal point. Similarly, each task unit within a task group is assigned its own additional number, which appears immediately following the task group number and is separated from it by a decimal point. Hence, the decimal designation 136.1.1, which was applied to the destroyers assigned to stations on the quarantine intercept arc during the 1962 Cuban crisis, indicated that these destroyers constituted Task Unit 1 of Task Group 1 of Task Force 136.

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commanded by COMCRUDESFLT 5 in the CANBERRA. This task group was to be further subdivided into three task units, each with its own commander subordinate to COMCRUDESFLT 6. The three task units within TG 136.1 were to be:

a. A surface intercept unit (Surface Blockade Unit 136.1.1), consisting of [twelve] destroyers (DD's) and commanded by COMDESRON 26 in the USS DEWEY; and

b. Two surface patrol units (Surface Patrol Unit 136.1.2 and Surface Patrol Unit 136.1.3), each consisting of one cruiser and [two] destroyers and commanded by the commanding officers of the USS CANBERRA and the USS NEWPORT NEWS, respectively.

A destroyer intercept line was to be established on an arc with a radius of 500 miles centered at Cape Maysi, Cuba. The [twelve] DD's constituting Surface Blockade Unit 136.1.1 were to occupy stations along this arc, which was approximately 650 miles long, extending from Latitude 27° 30' N., Longitude 70° W to Latitude 20° N., 65° W. The two surface patrol units within Task Group 136.1 also would be deployed to this same general area of operations. However, unlike the DD's assigned to the intercept unit, the ships assigned to the two surface patrol units would not be expected, at times when they had not been directed to undertake a specific pursuit mission, to operate within a specified distance of a fixed station.

555. The second task group within TF 136 would be an ASW/air surveillance group (TG 136.2). Unlike TG 136.1, it would not be further subdivided. TF 136.2 was to be commanded by COMCARDIV 18 in the USS ESSEX. In carrying out ASW/air surveillance operations, the ESSEX, with [37] carrier-based aircraft, including [14] helicopters, would be assisted by the Bermuda ASW group and of the Caribbean ASW group. Aerial surveillance was to be carried out in an area eastward of a line between Bermuda and Roosevelt Roads.

[Four] DD's were assigned to escort the ESSEX.

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556. A third task group within TF 136, consisting of two AO's and two DD's, would furnish logistic support. Designated TG 136.3, it would be commanded by the commanding officer of the USS ELKOMEN.¹

557. The chain of command for TF 136, then, was to proceed upward from the tactical level through the Task Force Commander (COMSECONDFLT) to CINCLANTFLT, CINCLANT, and the CNO and downward through these same channels.² Had these command arrangements actually been applied consistently during the conduct of the quarantine operations, the only deviation from established procedures in effect at the time the crisis arose would have been at the CINCLANT-CNO level. In recent years, the CINCS usually have reported directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a corporate body, rather than to one of its individual members.³ In this instance, however, even before TF 136 commenced operations, the CNO had been designated to serve as JCS representative for quarantine operations and the defense of Guantanamo. The fact that the CNO was serving in this capacity led, insofar as the conduct of quarantine operations was concerned, to a partial -- and temporary -- modification of the customary command relationships

¹CTF 136 OPORD 1-62, op.cit., TOP SECRET.

²An organizational chart depicting these anticipated command arrangements is presented in Table I, p. 221, below.

³Under the terms of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, the Unified and Specified Commanders assume legal responsibility for fulfilling combat missions assigned to them by the President, as Commander-in-Chief, and by the Secretary of Defense. However, in exercising direction over the Unified and Specified Commands, the Secretary of Defense is authorized by law to utilize the assistance of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Therefore, in recent practice, operational control of the Unified and Specified Commands usually has been exercised by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acting in behalf of the Secretary of Defense. Since 1958, when performing this function in conformity to the policy guidance of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff usually have been directed to act as a corporate body. However, the law reserves to the President discretionary authority to direct whatever changes in the chain of command, insofar as it affects the Unified and Specified Commanders, that he, as Commander-in-Chief, may determine to be necessary. With prior approval of the President, then, the Secretary of Defense can direct that the Joint Chiefs of Staff modify the procedures under which operational control over Unified and Specified Commanders is exercised. This prerogative was applied during the 1962 Cuban crisis.

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between the JCS and CINCLANT. With the CNO authorized to act in behalf of the entire JCS on quarantine matters, the command relationships which were established during the planning phase of the naval quarantine closely resembled those which had been commonplace before major changes in the command structure¹ were introduced in 1958.

558. As the crisis unfolded, the command arrangements which actually were applied to the conduct of quarantine operations were to differ significantly from those which had been anticipated when TF 136 was organized. These actual command arrangements subsequently will be described in some detail. They were to prove to be an admixture of initial dramatic deviations from traditional patterns, followed by a temporary reversion to those patterns, and finally, again a departure -- but less dramatic -- from tradition.

559. Irrespective of what command arrangements actually were to apply to the conduct of the quarantine, by 1240 EDT on 22 October COMSECONDFLT, in his capacity as Commander, TF 136 had issued his initial OP Order concerning the composition and concept of operations for the task force.² This OP order was effective for planning upon receipt and for execution when directed. Before U.S. intentions were publicly disclosed by the President, then, the forces required to implement the quarantine had been organized and were reaching a high state of operational readiness for their mission.

¹Prior to enactment of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, an "Executive Agent" procedure had been utilized. Under this arrangement, the Unified Commands were allocated among the various Services. Actual direction of the respective Unified Commanders was exercised, not by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a corporate body, but by the appropriate individual Service Chief acting in the capacity of an executive agent for the JCS.

The 1958 legislation was intended, among other things, to furnish a basis for modifying these former command relationships. However, under the new act, the President, as Commander-in-Chief, retained discretionary authority to effect whatever changes in the chain of command between himself and the CINCS that events might require. Such changes may be introduced at any time.

²CTF 136 OP ORD 1-62, transmitted as COMSECONDFLT Message DTG 221640Z October, op.cit., TCT SECRET.

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560. In addition, within the theater, steps had been taken to reinforce the U.S. base at Guantanamo. The last dependents were evacuated from Guantanamo shortly before the President began his address.

561. Before describing the actual quarantine operations which TF 136 subsequently conducted, it is necessary to recall briefly relevant decisions and actions being taken in Washington at the highest national levels.¹

E. THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL PRONOUNCEMENT

562. At 1900 EDT on 22 October, the President, as scheduled, began to deliver over the radio and television networks the address which publicly disclosed the U.S. decision to impose the naval quarantine as a first step in its response to the crisis. He announced the Soviet introduction of MRBM's and IRBM's into Cuba, stressed U.S. objections to this aggressive act, and outlined a program of action aimed at preventing any further build-up of Soviet offensive capabilities in Cuba and accomplishing the removal of those missiles and fighter-bombers already deployed to the island. The President stated that he had directed that seven initial steps be taken immediately. These were:

a. A strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba would be initiated; all ships bound for Cuba from whatever point of origin would be turned back if found to contain cargoes of offensive weapons. If necessary, the quarantine later would be extended to other types of cargo and carriers. However, as an initial step, the U.S. did not intend to interfere with traffic bringing food and other necessities to the Cuban people, as the Soviets had done during their blockade of Berlin in 1948.

¹Some of these already have been discussed, in a somewhat different context, in the earlier chapter on the U.S. decision. See pp. 85-90.

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b. Close surveillance of the military build up in Cuba would continue, and the U.S. armed forces had been directed to be prepared for any eventualities.

c. Any nuclear missile launched from Cuba against any nation in the Western Hemisphere would be regarded as an attack on the United States by the Soviet Union, requiring full retaliation upon the USSR.

d. The U.S. base at Guantanamo had been reinforced, dependents evacuated, and additional military units alerted to assist in the defense of Guantanamo if required.

e. The U.S. was calling for an immediate meeting of the Organ of Consultation, under the OAS, to consider the Soviet threat to hemispheric security and to invoke the appropriate articles of the Rio Treaty in support of all necessary action.

f. The U.S. was asking under the U.N. Charter for an emergency meeting of the Security Council and intended to introduce a resolution calling for the prompt dismantling and withdrawal of all offensive weapons in Cuba under U.N. supervision before the quarantine could be lifted.

g. Premier Khrushchev was requested to halt and eliminate this clandestine and provocative threat to world peace.

563. The President also warned that any hostile move anywhere in the Free World, including Berlin, would be met by whatever action was required.¹

564. The arrangements which were made to inform and coordinate with Allied states -- especially in NATO Europe and in Latin America -- prior to and simultaneously with the President's speech have been described elsewhere in this study and need not be repeated here. It is well to recall, however, that shortly after the President spoke, the State Department sent to all embassies and posts an amplification of the meaning of his remarks for use in their discussions with local governments.² In addition, on

¹The Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XLVII, No. 1220, 12 November 1962, pp. 715-720, UNCLASSIFIED.

²Further details may be found in Chapters III and IV of this historical analysis.

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Sunday evening, 21 October, the text of the President's speech, with a covering letter to Premier Khrushchev, had been sent to Embassy Moscow for delivery to the Soviet Foreign Office one hour before the President began his address.¹

F. REVISED COMMAND PROCEDURES

565 Although President Kennedy had not referred to a grace period in his public speech, the quarantine planners had envisaged that the first intercept would occur between 24 and 48 hours after the initial public announcement of U.S. intentions. It soon was to become apparent that the command procedures which had been established prior to the public announcement of U.S. intentions were not to apply during the actual conduct of the initial intercept operations.

566 Shortly before midnight on 22 October, the Secretary of Defense, the CNO, and their principal aides conferred at the Pentagon on implementation of the quarantine and arrangements for surveillance. After visiting CNO Flag Plot and Intelligence Plot to obtain the latest information on the positions of ships, the Secretary of Defense and the CNO apparently agreed that the initial interception should involve a Soviet ship, and should be made as soon as possible after the termination of the grace period.² At this time, the most likely candidate still was the Soviet merchant ship POLTAVA, and since CINCLANT already had alerted COMSECONDFLT to this fact, no new instructions to TF 136 were required.³

567. Shortly after midnight (EDT), in an early hour of 23 October, the JCS dispatched to CINCLANT revisions to the basic guidance on quarantine operations which had been furnished early

¹"Chronology of the Cuban Crisis...", op.cit., p. 7.

²CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

³Ibid.

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the previous day.¹ The changes were primarily editorial, and were designed to correlate the language and tone of the previous JCS directive with that of the President's speech. In addition, as CINCLANT had suggested, commanders of intercepting ships were authorized to permit any vessel which had been boarded and found not to be carrying prohibited materiel to proceed to Cuba. Commanders of intercepting ships also were authorized to designate the course to be followed by any ship believed to be carrying prohibited materiel which elected to proceed to a non-Cuban port.² The latter measure was designed to improve the capabilities of the quarantine force to maintain surveillance if this contingency arose.

563. That CINCLANT had found it necessary to obtain explicit JCS approval before delegating tactical decisions like those described above to the TF 136 Commander foreshadowed the command arrangements which actually were to apply when the initial intercepts occurred. However, the new JCS terms of reference still authorized CINCLANT to designate the ships to be intercepted. Therefore, at 1214 EDT on 23 October, in his capacity as CINCLANTFLT, CINCLANT directed that the NEWPORT NEWS proceed to intercept the POLTAVA at 241400Z October and that the ESSEX proceed to intercept the KIMOYSK at the same hour.³

569. Shortly thereafter, a revised version of CINCLANTFLT's OP Order 45-62 was dispatched to the quarantine task force. The revisions consisted of editorial modifications and other changes required by the two policy directives which had been received from the JCS since CINCLANTFLT's original OP order concerning the quarantine had been issued. Furthermore, certain command

¹This message also was drafted primarily within the Office of the CNO, who was serving as JCS representative for quarantine operations. However, in accordance with established precisis procedures, it, like the basic blockade message which had been dispatched earlier, was coordinated within the JCS organization and transmitted as a JCS communication.

²JCS Message 6896 to CINCLANT, et al., DTG 230609Z October, 1962
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³CINCLANTFLT message to COMSECONDFLT, DTG 231614Z October, 1962
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authority previously delegated to the TF 136 Commander now was explicitly reserved to CINCLANTFLT. No ship not designated for interception by CINCLANTFLT was to be interfered with, except in the event of hostile attack. No ship designated for interception was to be boarded or searched without CINCLANTFLT's authorization.

570. The revised OP order also designated the ports to which ships taken into custody were to be diverted unless otherwise directed by CINCLANTFLT or the quarantine commander. These were: Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Charleston, South Carolina; and Roosevelt Roads or San Juan, Puerto Rico.¹ Upon arrival at these ports, the ships taken into custody were to be chopped to the Coast Guard. Special Coast Guard units meanwhile were being assigned to these ports to assume OPCON of diverted ships.

G. THE SECOND PRESIDENTIAL PRONOUNCEMENT

571. Meanwhile, during the afternoon of 23 October, the OAS had adopted a resolution unanimously backing the quarantine and urging the immediate removal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. In New York, at the U.N., a debate was under way in the Security Council. Early in the evening, at the White House, the President affixed his signature to the proclamation on the interdiction of the delivery of offensive weapons to Cuba. The Presidential proclamation ordered implementation of the quarantine beginning at 1400Z (1000 EDT) on 24 October. The list of prohibited materiel it contained conformed closely to the one originally transmitted to CINCLANT or the JCS on 22 October. [Both had failed to mention missile propellants explicitly. The omission was not discovered and corrected until 25 October, and missile fuels were not formally added to the list of prohibited materiel by the Secretary of Defense until 27 October].²

¹CINCLANTFLT message to COMSECONDFLT, et al., 231710Z October, 1962 SECRET.

²JCS Message 6978 to CINCLANT, 251759Z October, 1962 UNCLASSIFIED: "OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events, 2700 to 2800Z October," TOP SECRET.

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572. As the President was signing the interdiction proclamation, a message, drafted within JCS earlier in the day, directing CINCLANT to execute the naval quarantine plan, was dispatched. It altered the previously developed command arrangements in only one respect; authority to order strikes against the bases of any hostile Cuban force which attacked Guantanamo was delegated to the local commander.¹ The earlier rules of engagement for the quarantine had required explicit JCS approval before such strikes could be initiated.

573. Shortly after 2000 EDT, the CNO, the Secretary of Defense, and the Deputy Secretary of Defense again visited CNO Flag Plot and the OPNAV Intelligence Plot to be briefed on the latest positions of ships assigned to the quarantine force and of incoming merchant ships.²

574. By this time; several arrangements also were in effect to ensure that the Chairman, JCS, was kept fully cognizant of quarantine developments. The special J-3 Blockade (i.e., Quarantine) Watch was preparing a written brief of significant developments which had occurred during each watch period. These memoranda were addressed to the Executive Officer to the Chairman, JCS, and were personally delivered to the Office of the Chairman by the J-3 officer who had stood the special Quarantine Watch. (Copies of these memoranda also were circulated within J-3, but available data are insufficient to permit reconstruction of the details.) It also was the responsibility of the special Quarantine Watch Officer to attend the briefings on Cuban developments being conducted for the Chairman, JCS, by a Deputy Director, J-3, each morning at 0800 Washington time. At these briefings, the special Quarantine Watch Officer was expected to be prepared to answer questions as required. (An OPNAV Watch Officer from CNO Flag Plot

¹ JCS Message 6916 to CINCLANT, et al., DTG 232304Z October, 1962
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² CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

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also attended these 0800 briefings for the same purpose. Presumably, the written briefs on quarantine developments being prepared within OPNAV also were being circulated to the Office of the Chairman, JCS.)¹

H. INITIAL INTERCEPTS: MODIFICATION OF TRADITIONAL COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS

575. After CINCLANT had received the JCS message directing him to execute the naval quarantine plan, he had directed CTF 136 (COMSECONDFLT) formally to activate his task force. During the night of 23-24 October, the destroyers assigned to stations on the quarantine line moved towards their positions. All stations on the line were expected to be filled by 1800 Washington time on 24 October.² In addition, during the night, the ESCSEX and the NEWPORT NEWS were following a course designed to enable them, as they earlier had been directed, to intercept the Soviet ships POLTAVA and KIMOYSK at 1000 Washington time the following morning (24 October).³ This hour was, of course, the very one when, according to the President's proclamation, the quarantine would go into effect.⁴

¹ Further details on the 0800 J-3 briefings for the Chairman, JCS, may be found in Enclosure 3 of this study. The role of CNO Flag Plot is discussed at greater length in Appendix B to Enclosure D.

² J-3 briefing for CJCS, 0800G 24 October, TOP SECRET.

³ CINCLANTFLT message to COMSECONDFLT (CTF 136), DTG 231614Z October, TOP SECRET, op.cit.

⁴ Note that CINCLANT, in his capacity as CINCLANTFLT, instructed CTF 136 to carry out these two intercepts at this precise hour even before the President had affixed his signature to the official proclamation and before the JCS formally had directed execution of the quarantine plan. The first action preceded the second and the third by approximately five hours. CINCLANTFLT's intercept instructions to CTF 136 were dispatched at 1214 EDT on 23 October. (The relevant message is referenced in footnote 3, above.) The President recorded the time he signed the proclamation as 1905 EDT. (A facsimile of this Presidential notation may be found in The Department of State Bulletin, Vol. XLVII, No. 1220, November 12, 1962, p. 717, UNCLASSIFIED.) The relevant JCS message was dispatched at 1904 EDT. (JCS Message 6916 to CINCLANT et al., DTG 232304Z October, SECRET.)

This bit of evidence suggests that CINCLANT was being kept closely informed, [by means of secure voice circuits, of important developments evolving in Washington. Undoubtedly, this coordination was accomplished primarily through one CNO, acting in his capacity as JCS representative for quarantine operations and the defense of Guantanamo. Although this aspect of the conduct of the quarantine is relevant to an analysis of command and control, available data unfortunately did not suffice for a detailed reconstruction of the use of secure voice links during the crisis.

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576. By 1000 EDT on the 24th, the ESSEX was closing in on the KIMOYSK. According to the command arrangements which earlier had been agreed upon and which conformed to the traditional pattern, CINCLANT, who had ordered the intercept, had been furnished with all the policy guidance required to carry out quarantine operations. The Commander, TF 136, was directly responsible to CINCLANT through CINCLANTFLT. Nevertheless, the Deputy CNO for Fleet Operations and Readiness, who was on duty at the CNO Policy Watch at the time, requested White House guidance on the instructions to be forwarded to the ESSEX. He was told that surveillance was to be maintained but that the ship was not to be intercepted. These instructions were transmitted directly to the ship's commander.¹

577. By 1000 EDT on 24 October, the Soviet merchant ship POLTAVA, which was scheduled to be intercepted at that hour by the NEWPORT NEWS, apparently had reversed its course and had turned back towards the USSR. The fourteen other POLTAVA-class ships which in addition to the KIMOYSK and the POLTAVA, had been bound towards Cuba also were beginning to show signs of erratic behavior.² Ships of this class, which were estimated to be capable of carrying missiles in their holds, were of primary interest as intercept targets. [Perhaps it was the receipt of intelligence indicators that these vessels might have been instructed by Moscow not to proceed to Cuba that prompted the CNO Policy Watch Duty Officer to seek White House guidance on the intercept of the KIMOYSK by the ESSEX. If this hypothesis is correct, the chain of command which, in ordinary circumstances, would have been used to relay

¹CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET. According to this source, the instructions were transmitted as CNO message DTG 241451Z October to COMCARDIV 18 (CDR, TG 136.2) in the ESSEX and "all key officials (DOD/Navy) were notified."

²Information on the turn-around ships of the POLTAVA class still is closely held, and the exact time sequence involved in their reversal of course is not disclosed in the data upon which this account is based. However, indirect evidence suggests that the POLTAVA was among the first to turn around.

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[Instructions to the ESSEX was bypassed to ensure that the revised orders would reach the intercepting U.S. vessel at the earliest possible moment.] B114

578. By the evening of 24 October, Washington time, Soviet tanker also were moving towards the quarantine area. Whether or not the Soviet Union had ordered all the POLTAVA-class ships to turn around still was unclear. According to Navy Flag Plot calculations, a Soviet tanker, the BUCHAREST, would pass near the ESSEX during the night. The CNO, through his Executive Officer, requested White House guidance on the advisability of sending ships to intercept tankers. At about 2140 EDT, the Secretary of Defense again visited CNO Flag Plot. He was informed that the estimated time of contact between the BUCHAREST and the ESSEX was approximately 250200 EDT. The Secretary instructed that he be called in time to return to Flag Plot and make the decision on whether or not to intercept the tanker. Subsequently, more reliable surveillance reports were received, and revised calculations on the positions and speeds of the two ships revealed that, if they both remained on their present course, contact between the ESSEX and the BUCHAREST was not even remotely likely.¹ In the meantime, all sixteen of the POLTAVA-class ships which earlier had been headed for Cuba had begun to reverse their courses and to turn eastward.²

579. When it had become apparent that all one Soviet ships of primary interest were turning away from the quarantine line, shortly after midnight COMSECONDFLT (Commander, Tr 136) directed that the

¹CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

²Memorandum, "Significant Items for 250800Z J-3 Briefing for CJCS, TOP SECRET. Presumably, this memorandum was prepared by the Quarantine (i.e., Blockade) Watch. At approximately the same time, CINCLANT reported to the JCS that, on the basis of the information available to him, eight of the POLTAVA-class merchant ships bound for Cuba had reversed their course. (CINCLANT STRETF as of 251200Z October, transmitted as CINCLANT message 251324Z October to AIG 930, et al., TOP SECRET.)

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ESSEX and [two] DD's proceed to intercept the BUCHAREST and to maintain contact. The tanker was not to be stopped pending instructions from CINCLANTFLT. COMSECONDFLT's flagship had increased speed and also was moving towards the BUCHAREST.¹ By 0800 EDT on 25 October, CINCLANTFLT had directed COMSECONDFLT to intercept the Soviet tanker.² The ESSEX and [eight] destroyers were maintaining surveillance of the BUCHAREST, and the NEWPORT NEWS with [four] destroyers was closing in. Earlier, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations had instructed COMASWFORLANT in the ESSEX to ensure that the BUCHAREST did not slip through the quarantine line. He also had directed that additional efforts be made to secure photographs of the Soviet POLTAVA-class merchant ships which had turned around and were moving eastward.³

580. During the night of 24-25 October, then, events had introduced a requirement to collect as much information as possible on the turn-around ships and simultaneously to locate and identify other merchant ships headed for Cuba. Therefore, photoreconnaissance and aerial surveillance activities increased sharply.⁴

[About 0300 EDT on the 25th, CINCCAC implemented his "Blue Banner" OPLAN designed to assist in detecting, identifying and reporting on merchant ships in CINCLANT's surveillance area.⁵ By 0900 EDT,

¹COMSECONDFLT SITSUM to CINCLANTFLT, 250500Z October, SECRET.

²CINCLANT's SITREP as of 251200Z October, transmitted as CINCLANT message 251324Z October to AIG 930, et al., TOP SECRET.

³CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

⁴Of course, information on ships headed for Cuba and their cargoes also was being received from other sources, both covert and overt. However, these data had to be supplemented by actual sightings in order to plot the precise locations of the incoming ships on the high seas, their estimated courses and times of arrival in the quarantine area, etc. BIA

⁵CINCSAC message 250717Z October to AIG 930, SECRET. [The fact that the SAC aircraft assigned to this mission reported each sighting in messages directed to a large number of action addressees apparently accounted for the tremendous upsurge in the number of incoming JCS messages during this period. See Enclosure C to this study for further details on the latter point.]

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approximately six hours later, SAC aircraft assigned to the "Blue Banner" mission had reported locating 108 merchant ships in the Atlantic. Of these, seven were believed to be of USSR or Soviet Bloc registry.¹ Steps also were taken to reinforce the ASW/air surveillance task group within TF 136. Task Group ALPHA, commanded by COMCARDIV 16 in the RANDOLPH, was assigned to provide additional ASW/air surveillance support in the general vicinity of the quarantine line.²

581 So concerted was the photoreconnaissance effort during the night that the master of one Soviet ship even reported to Moscow that he had been fired upon on the high seas by low-flying American aircraft. The incident provoked a formal protest note from the Soviet government a few days later. Upon receipt of the note, full reports on the incident were requested of CINCLANTFLT. The "shots" turned out to be magnesium photoflash cartridges dropped during the height of the U.S. effort to photograph the Soviet ships turning away from the quarantine line.³

582 As has been mentioned already, while the various forces assigned to reconnaissance missions were carrying out their tasks, during the night of 24-25 October the ESSEX, with [eight] destroyers, and the NEWPORT NEWS, with [four] destroyers, had been moving into

¹J-3 briefing for CJCS, 260830Q October, TOP SECRET.

²In addition to the requirement for increased aerial surveillance, at the time the quarantine went into effect intelligence had indicated the probable presence of [some] Soviet submarines near the quarantine area. Shortly thereafter, a total of six positive sightings of Soviet conventionally powered submarines in the approaches to the Caribbean had been reported. Once they had been discovered, all the submarines began a return to the bases of the Soviet Northern Fleet, and apparently no replacements for the were deployed. In retrospect, after analysis of photographs and other data, it was estimated that a total of four Soviet submarines were deployed to the Caribbean area and that all returned to their home bases shortly after the quarantine was imposed. (LANTCOM, "CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)," op.cit., p. 11, TOP SECRET.)

³Message from U.S. Embassy Moscow to Department of State, No. 1114, 28 October 1962, readdressed to CINCLANTFLT, TOP SECRET; CINCLANTFLT message to CNO, DTG 282032Z October, TOP SECRET. Receipt of the Soviet protest note and the subsequent attempt to establish in detail what actually had happened also stimulated a series of telephone conversations between the staffs of the CNO and LANTCOM. (CNO Fla. Plot Log, TOP SECRET.)

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position to intercept the Soviet tanker BUCHAREST. These elements of TF 136 had not been directed to board the Soviet tanker, and under the rules of engagement governing quarantine operations this decision was reserved to CINCLANTFLT -- or to even higher authority

583. By 0915 EDT on 25 October, reconnaissance had confirmed that the BUCHAREST carried no cargo on deck.¹ She was kept under surveillance. Meanwhile, another Soviet tanker, the VINNITSA, had passed through the quarantine line and was proceeding to Havana. She was to be reported by patrol ships operating in the Windward Passage and along the north coast of Cuba when she arrived in that area.²

584. Throughout the morning of the 25th, the flurry of activity in the vicinity of the quarantine line continued. The DD PIERCE had made contact with the Lebanese freighter MARUCLA, which earlier had reported a cargo of sulphur, paper, machinery, trucks and spare parts. The MARUCLA was known to be under Soviet charter. CINCLANTFLT directed that the PIERCE stop and board the MARUCLA, but before receipt of the message the PIERCE had left the vicinity and had begun to trail another contact, the East German passenger ship VOLKERFREUND(SCHAFT).³

585. Some temporary confusion had arisen when a garble in a single sideband transmission from COMSECONDFLT to CINCLANTFLT resulted in misidentification of the MARUCLA as the ZARUWI, but the problem soon was cleared up.⁴ CINCLANTFLT then directed that

¹CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

²Memorandum, "Significant Items for 250800Q J-3 Briefing for CJCS," TOP SECRET. Presumably, this memorandum was prepared by the Quarantine (i.e., Blockade) Watch.

³CINCLANTFLT message DTG 251528Z October to COMSECONDFLT, information CNO and USS PIERCE, UNCLASSIFIED; "OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events, 2500Q to 2600Q October," TOP SECRET.

⁴The amount of priority traffic which had to be carried on the CW communications links between CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT's headquarters and CTF 136 was increased by the fact that, during the initial period of quarantine operations, many tactical decisions were made in Washington at the highest levels. Therefore, when feasible, at these echelons the single sideband voice radio link was utilized in order to expedite the communications flow. (LANTCOM, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, "CINCLANT Historical Account (Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)," 29 April 1963, TOP SECRET, p. 208.)

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a DD from the Logistic Support Group reestablish contact with the MARUCLA. By 1447 EDT, the J. P. KENNEDY was enroute.¹ Meanwhile, the NSC had met at the White House during the morning. Having been briefed on the military situation, the President issued policy instructions covering interdiction and inspection of non-Bloc ships.²

586. At 2107 EDT, CNO Flag Plot received a copy of a message indicating that the MARUCLA had been located by a carrier-based surveillance aircraft and that the PIERCE was proceeding to join the J. P. KENNEDY for the intercept, since it was in the vicinity. Soon thereafter, at 2140 EDT, Flag Plot received word that the Secretary of Defense would visit Flag Plot shortly in order to make the decision on the intercept of the MARUCLA. The PIERCE exchanged messages with the MARUCLA and verified its destination as Cuba and its cargo as sulphur. Visual observation showed trucks on the deck. The KENNEDY was expected to be alongside by first light. At 2230 EDT, the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and CNO officials arrived at Flag Plot following a visit to CNO Intelligence Plot. They remained about 10 minutes.³ Presumably, the decision to direct the KENNEDY to intercept and board the MARUCLA was made at this time. Although available data do not permit a precise reconstruction, they do suggest that this decision was made at the highest levels.⁴ Apparently, CINCLANT --

¹ OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events..., "op.cit.", TOP SECRET.

² "Chronology of the Cuban Crisis...", "op.cit.", page 11.

³ CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET; "OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events," op.cit., TOP SECRET.

⁴ Throughout the quarantine, a number of decisions seem to have been made in the course of conversations between high-ranking civilian and military officials (on the secure telephones linking the Pentagon to the White House). However, the data utilized for this analysis are insufficient for an accurate recapitulation either of the decisions which were made in this manner, or of how this practice affected the command and control process. We do know that the President, earlier in the day, had furnished to the NSC, of which the Secretary of Defense is a member, policy guidance on the interdiction and inspection of non-Bloc ships.

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who also holds the position of CINCLANTFLT -- and the Commander of TF 136 were informed ex post facto of the instructions transmitted from Washington to the DD KENNEDY.

587. While attention at the highest levels still was concentrated on formulating a decision concerning the interception of the Lebanese ship MARUCLA, the East German passenger ship VOLKERFREUND SCHAFT, bound for Havana, and a British ship bound for Jamaica passed through the quarantine line. The NEWPORT NEWS and her destroyer escort had broken away from the group still shadowing the BUCHAREST and were returning to roving patrol in the center of the quarantine line.¹ Shortly thereafter, the tanker BUCHAREST -- the second Soviet ship to cross the line -- was cleared to proceed without having been boarded.

588. By 0725 EDT on 26 October, a boarding party from the J. P. KENNEDY was preparing to board the MARUCLA and was aboard the Lebanese freighter by 0750. The boarding party returned at 1020 reporting no incidents, no prohibited material in evidence, and all papers in order. The boarding party obtained a copy of the ship's manifest, confirmed its cargo, and cleared it to proceed to Havana on a designated course via Providence Channel. Although all holds were battened down and inaccessible, one was opened for inspection in order that "electro-measuring instruments" listed on the manifest could be examined. The KENNEDY was maintaining surveillance pending instructions.

589. The Soviet merchant ship GROZNY also was being trailed, but during the night of 25-26 October, contact with the GROZNY was lost. CINCLANTFLT directed that in the event contact was not regained and held during the night a search was to be conducted beginning first light 25 October by aircraft from Roosevelt Roads and Bermuda.² Contact was reestablished, and by 1000 EDT on

¹OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events, ' op.cit., TOP SECRET.

²CINCLANTFLT message to COMSECONDFLT, DTG 260228Z October, SECRET.

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26 October, the LAWRENCE, after having been refueled by the NEWPORT NEWS, was en route to intercept the GROZNY. The ship was not to be stopped or boarded until directed.¹

590. By the time the LAWRENCE was alongside, the GROZNY was dead in the water. The LAWRENCE subsequently was recalled from the intercept and instructed to report its observations but not to board the ship unless so directed.²

591. As the first three days of quarantine operations drew to a close, there was considerable ambiguity about the command arrangements which actually were to apply to TF 136. Certain intercept decisions had been taken at the highest levels, and CINCLANT, CINCLANTFLT, and the Task Force Commander presumably had been bypassed in several instances. The primary reason for these modifications of the expected command arrangements for TF 136 was the fact that all but one of the principal targets for intercept -- Soviet ships of the POLTAVA class -- had turned away from Cuba before arriving at the designated intercept area. This development had necessitated ad hoc decisions, the need for which had not been fully anticipated during the planning for the quarantine. The single POLTAVA-class ship with which contact had been established the KIMOYSK -- had not been stopped or boarded at the direction of the highest authority.

592. The JCS itself was not directly involved in this aspect of the decision-making process. However, the CNO, as JCS representative for quarantine operations, and his deputies served as the direct point of contact between higher civilian authority and the ships assigned to TF 136. Hence, the actual command arrangements utilized during this period were an admixture of those which had been set up before TF 136 was operational and dramatic departures therefrom. Figure 1 depicts the intended command structure;

¹ COMSECONDFLT message to CINCLANTFLT, DTG 260100Z, October, 1962
SECRET

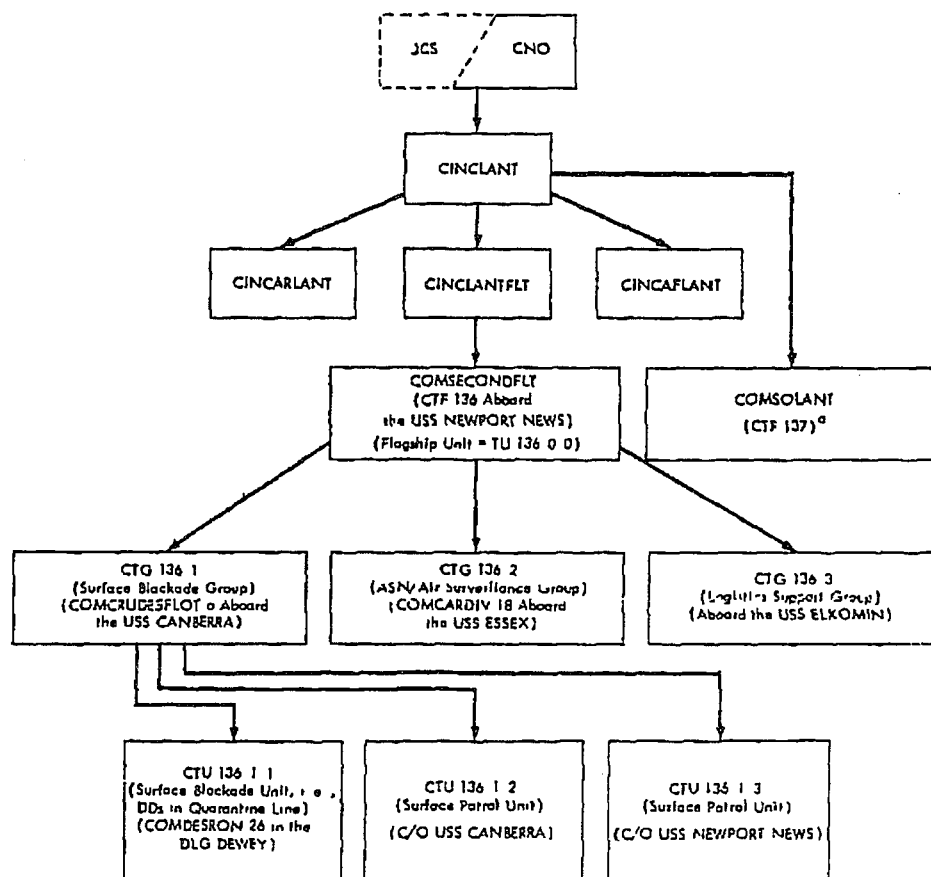
² COMSECONDFLT message to CINCLANTFLT, information CNO, CINCLANT and JCS, DTG 260500Z October, 1962 SECRET.

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^a/ Further details concerning TF137
may be found on pps 237-243

FIGURE 1. Command Arrangements Envisaged for Quarantine Force Operations
during Planning and Alerting Phase, 15-23 October 1962

3-17-64-34

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DRAFT 3

FIGURE 1
ENCLOSURE A

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Figures 2 and 3 show the chain of command actually utilized after contact was established with the KIMOYSK and the MARUCLA, respectively. Command arrangements similar to those depicted in Figures 2 and 3 also apparently had been utilized for other intercept decisions during this three-day period.

I. INTEGRATION OF POLITICAL AND OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

593. The requirement that conduct of the quarantine operations and other military readiness preparations be closely integrated with developments in the international political arena reached its climax on 27 and 28 October. Yet, during this critical period command and control of the quarantine force reverted to more traditional channels.

594. On the 26th, two letters from Premier Khrushchev to President Kennedy had been received. The later one, which had arrived in Washington shortly before midnight, was highly emotional and seemed to reflect the deep concern of the Soviet leader that a direct military confrontation with the U.S. must be avoided at all costs. In addition, Khrushchev had written to the U.N. Secretary General, accepting his earlier suggestion that Soviet ships stay out of the quarantine area.

595. In contrast with the three previous days, there was little activity in the vicinity of the quarantine line on the 27th. Early in the morning, CINCLANTFLT had directed that the [two] DD's earlier designated to intercept the only Soviet ship with which contact had been established, the GROZNYV, stay out of sight and track the Soviet ship by radar. The GROZNYV remained dead in the water all day, finally getting under way again about 2100 PM Washington time. The only other ships under surveillance were the MARITSA, of Lebanese registry, and the Greek ship PELLA. CINCLANT had directed an intercept of the MARITSA. The PELLA was also to be intercepted in the vicinity of the quarantine line,

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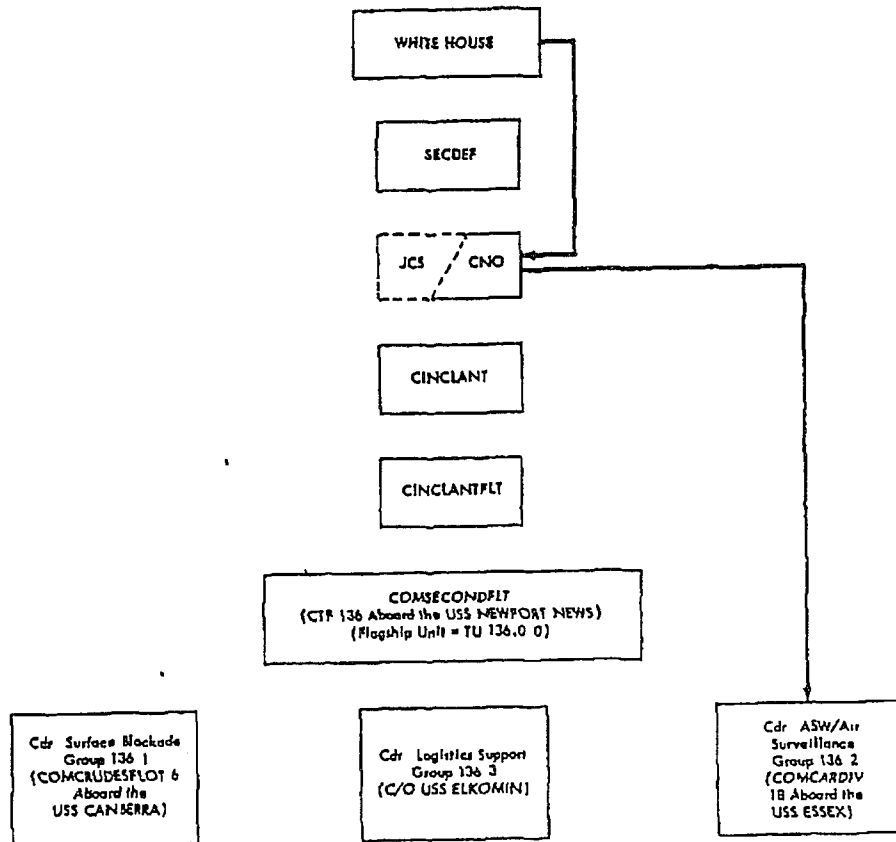


FIGURE 2. Command Arrangements Utilized in Decision Concerning Intercept of KIMOYSK, 24 October 1962

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FIGURE 2
ENCLOSURE A

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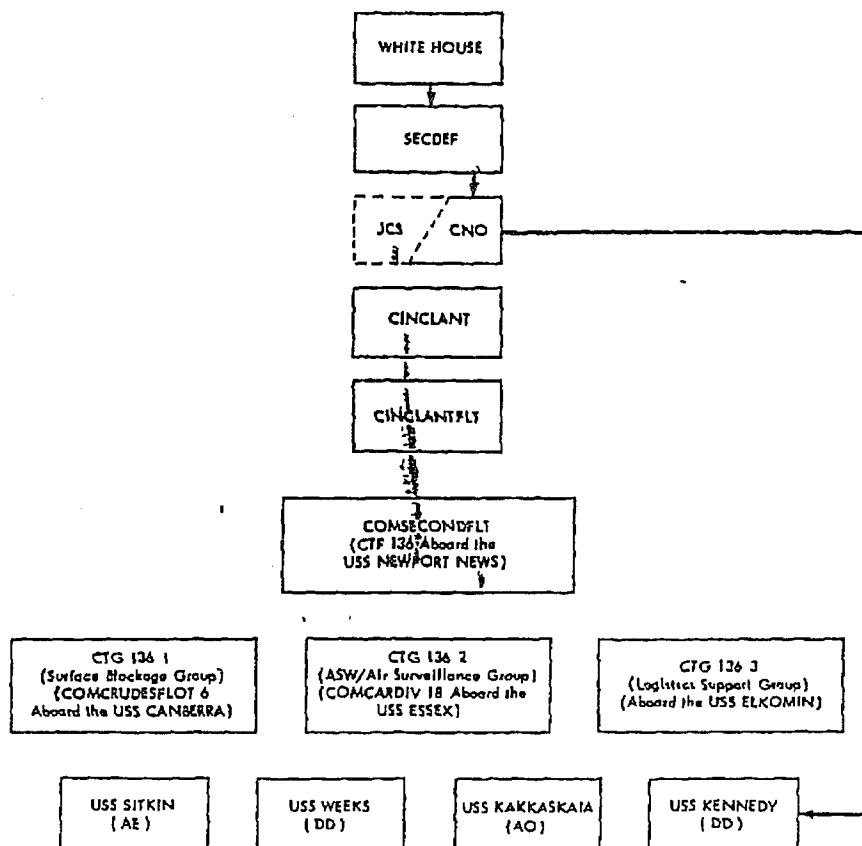


FIGURE 3 Command Arrangements Utilized in Decision Concerning Intercept of MARUCLA, 25-26 October 1962

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FIGURE 3
ENCLOSURE A

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited

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D	268	269	270	271	272	273	274	275	276	277	278	279	280	281
E	282	283	284	285	286	287	288	289	290	X	fig 4	fig 5		
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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War

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The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited: An International Collection of Documents, from the Bay of Pigs to the Brink of Nuclear War reproduces a comprehensive collection of records from the archives of the three key governments involved in the most dangerous confrontation of the Cold war. Declassified records from the United States, Russia and Cuba significantly advance analysis of the historical foundations of the missile crisis, the policy calculations and considerations of President John F. Kennedy and premiers Nikita Khrushchev and Fidel Castro, and the overt and covert military and paramilitary operations that combined to bring the world to the threshold of a nuclear exchange. Topics extensively covered in the documentation include the failed U.S.-led invasion at the Bay of Pigs, renewed attempts to overthrow Castro through Operation Mongoose and Operation Northwoods, U.S. military contingency planning for conflict with Cuba, naval warfare, Soviet and Cuban decision making and communications during the crisis, and the repercussions for U.S.-Soviet relations, and Soviet-Cuban relations in its aftermath. Materials were identified, obtained, assembled and indexed by the National Security Archive, a non-profit Washington D.C. based research institute and library. The microfiche collection is accompanied by a printed guide and index.

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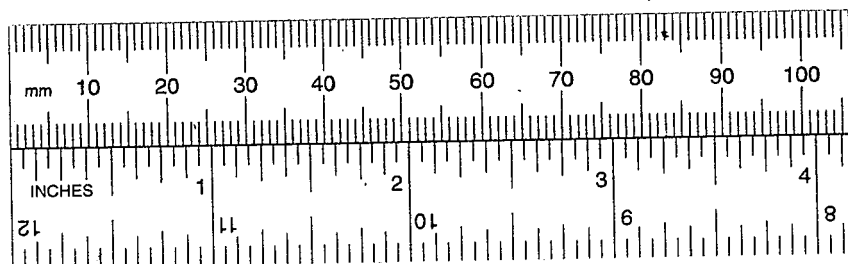
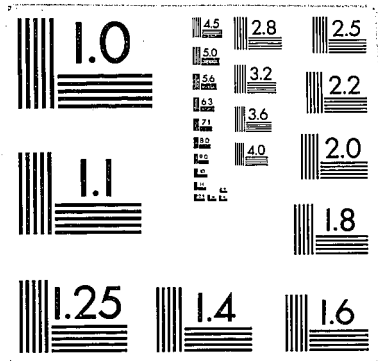
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but if on surveillance her topside appearance showed nothing suspected of being prohibited materiel, the PELLIA was not to be trailed stopped or boarded.¹

595. Meanwhile, at the White House, the NSC Executive Committee was in session, attempting to work out a reply to the latest Khrushchev message and to evaluate his promise to the U.N. Secretary General to keep Soviet shipping away from the quarantine area. The Executive Committee was still in session when the unofficial text of a new Khrushchev message, entirely different in tone, was received. Now, the Soviet Premier wanted to exchange withdrawal of his missiles in Cuba for removal of U.S. JUPITERS deployed in Turkey. The President decided to issue a public statement in response to the new, and unacceptable, message and to reply later to Khrushchev's letter of the evening before.²

597. During the afternoon, the tension in Washington mounted, although the quarantine area remained relatively quiet. By the time the NSC Executive Committee resumed its session at the White House about 1600 EDT, a U-2 reconnaissance plane had been shot down over Cuba, and two low-level reconnaissance aircraft carrying out additional surveillance of the island had been fired upon. The Executive Committee discussed additional steps which might be taken the following day, including alternatives ranging from ordering the execution of CPAN 312 to mobilizing U.S. merchant ships and adding POL to the list of prohibited materiel.

598. Despite the signs of stiffening response to the course of action being followed by the U.S., the President approved a reply to Mr. Khrushchev's letter of the previous evening. The President's letter said, in essence, that if the Soviet Premier's remarks had been interpreted correctly, he had indirectly offered to remove his

¹CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

²"Chronology of the Cuban Crisis...", op.cit., p. 14.

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MREB's and IREB's from Cuba. If this interpretation were correct, the President welcomed the Soviet leader's decision.¹

599. Shortly after this reply had been dispatched to Moscow, the State Department received a copy of a communication from Premier Castro to the U.N. Secretary General. Castro flatly rejected the Secretary General's earlier proposal that the missile bases be dismantled. In addition, Castro demanded an immediate lifting of the naval quarantine.²

600. About 1000 EST on the next day (28 October), Radio Moscow began to broadcast another message to the President from Premier Khrushchev. The full text, as broadcast, was available for the 1100 meeting of the NSC Executive Committee. The official text, delivered to the American Embassy in Moscow only ten minutes after the start of the broadcast, had not yet been received in Washington. In his message, Khrushchev reported that he had ordered the dismantling and return to the USSR, under U.N. supervision, of the missiles in Cuba. A reply to Mr. Khrushchev was discussed, approved, sent and released before the official text was received.³

601. About an hour later, the JCS invited the attention of Unified and Specified Commanders to the latest Soviet proposal, but warned that it might be insincere and a ploy designed to gain time. The CINCS were cautioned not to relax alert procedures.⁴ Nevertheless until subsequent events could prove whether or not Khrushchev's offer was sincere, it was considered desirable to avoid any provocative actions at the quarantine line. The JCS therefore transmitted to CINCLANT a message drafted by the CNO instructing that no forceful action was to be taken and no ships were to be boarded until receipt of further orders. Intercepted ships were to be challenged

¹"Chronology of the Cuban Crisis....," op.cit., pp. 15-16.

²Ibid.

³"Chronology of the Cuban Crisis....," op.cit., p. 16.

⁴JCS Message 7065, to CINCLANT 30 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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by visual means only. Should any difficulties be encountered, these were to be reported immediately to the JCS and the CNO before any further action was taken.¹ About an hour later, the identical message was readdressed to provide for information copies to CINCARLANT, CINCAFLANT, CINCONAD, CINCSAC, and the JACES.² Upon instructions from the Secretary of Defense, the JCS also directed that CINCLANT was to maintain a sharp lookout for ALPHA 66 forces and to prevent this Cuban exile group from undertaking any harassment operations against Cuba at this time.³

602. Prior to the issuance of these new instructions, early on the morning of the 28th, CINCLANTFLT had directed the quarantine task force commander to intercept the Russian cargo ship BELOVODSK during the early forenoon on Monday 29 October. The ship was to be trailed, but not stopped or boarded unless so directed. Two destroyers from the quarantine task force continued to trail the GROZNY. By 0555 EST, the GROZNY was dead in the water and the two destroyers holding it under surveillance were remaining about 20 miles to the north. Two DD's were en route to intercept the Greek ship MARITSA.⁴ Later in the day, the MARITSA and the PELLIA were cleared through the quarantine line. Two destroyers continued to keep the GROZNY under surveillance.

603. To take advantage of the opportunity presented by the temporary lull in operations, CINCLANT proposed to the JCS that the quarantine line be reoriented in order to utilize available forces more economically and to concentrate on intercepting ships using the most likely routes to Cuba. He envisaged a new line, composed of [seven] stations, extending from 90 miles north of the Grand Bahamas to the northeast entrance to the Mona Passage. An [eighth]

¹JCS Message 7069 to CINCLANT, DTG 281720Z October 1962, UNCLASSIFIED.

²JCS Message 7071, DTG 281812Z October 1962, UNCLASSIFIED.

³JCS Message 7075 to CINCLANT, DTG 282224Z October, SECRET.

⁴J-3 briefing for CJCS, 280800R October, 1962, TOP SECRET.

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station, manned by a hunter-killer group, would be located to the northeast of this line.¹ The JCS, through the CNO as its representative for quarantine operations, approved CINCLANT's proposal promptly.² TF 136 now was responsible for carrying out intercepts in a circular area with a 500-n.mi. radius centered on Cape Maysi. The Secretary of Defense had directed this expansion of the intercept area primarily in order to permit the ships in the task force more freedom of action to follow up contacts. Reducing the number of quarantine stations would free more ships for patrol and would make it more difficult for incoming Soviet ships to avoid transiting areas near known quarantine stations, as they had done previously. The quarantine line was reoriented on 30 October.³

604. The same day, beginning first light, the quarantine was lifted temporarily on the instructions of the President at the request of the U.N. Secretary General. After Khrushchev had offered to dismantle and return the missiles in Cuba to the USSR, Castro had objected vigorously to any U.N. inspection. The Secretary General had accepted Castro's invitation to go to Havana to try to work out a solution.

605. Despite the temporary lifting of the quarantine, surface surveillance of the GROZNY and the BELOVODSK was continued. The two Russian ships were tracked by radar, with the ships accomplishing the surveillance remaining out of visual range of the Soviet vessels at the direction of CINCLANTFLT.⁴

606. Once it had become apparent that the Secretary General's attempt to negotiate a settlement of the Cuban crisis during his visit to Havana would not be successful, the JCS, late in the

¹ CINCLANT message DTG 280420Z October 1962, to JCS, SECRET.

² JCS Message 7064 to CINCLANT, DTG 281545Z October, 1962 UNCLASSIFIED. The message was drafted within OPNAV.

³ COMSECONDFLT OP Order 1-62 to CTF 136, DTG 300056Z October, TOP SECRET.

⁴ CINCLANTFLT message, DTG 301858Z October, 1962 to COMSECONDFLT, TOP SECRET.

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evening of 31 October Washington time, instructed CINCLANT to reinstitute the quarantine operations beginning at daybreak on 1 November. However, due to the uncertain political situation, CINCLANT was directed to challenge or hail and trail ships entering the quarantine area only. No vessels were to be boarded or searched and no force was to be used except in self-defense unless prior authorization from the CNO, the JCS, or higher authority first had been obtained. CINCLANT was instructed to continue to report quickly all incidents.¹

607. Shortly after midnight on 1 November, Washington time, the only surface ships being trailed were the BELOVODSK and the GROZNY. Preparations had been made for an aerial search commencing first light to locate the Soviet merchant ship MIR, with which contact had been lost during the two-day suspension of quarantine operations.

608. CINCLANT reported to the JCS the location of ships of primary interest heading for Cuba and located west of longitude 50° as of 011058Z November. These vessels were: the Russian ships GROZNY, BELOVODSK, MIR, and KARL MARX; the Swedish ships PIRGIT and GOTTERN; the Cuban ships CAMAGUEY and SIERRA MAESTRA; the Czech ship KLADNO; the Italian ship ASPROMONTE; the East German ship THEO KORNER; and the Turkish merchant ship ESCREF. CINCLANT reminded the JCS that his present instructions prevented stopping or boarding any of the above ships unless authorized by higher authority. Therefore, CINCLANT recommended that they be permitted to proceed after identification.²

609. Most, if not all, of the four Russian ships had been dead in the water for some time, presumably awaiting direct instructions

¹JCS Message 7146 to CINCLANT DTG 010046Z November, to CINCLANT, SECRET, confirming earlier telephone instructions from Admiral Anderson (CNO) to Vice Admiral Beakle, for relay to Admiral Dennison (CINCLANT).

²CINCLANT message to JCS, DTG 011058Z November, 1962 TOP SECRET.

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from Moscow. In fact, ever since the morning of 28 October, when the White House first received Khrushchev's message announcing that he had ordered the Soviet offensive missile bases in Cuba dismantled and the missiles returned to the USSR, all Russian merchant ships within TF 136's area of operations had been behaving erratically. Apparently, the Soviet Union was experiencing certain command and control problems of its own, and the ships' masters were awaiting explicit orders. In addition, some Soviet ships seemed to be having mechanical difficulties during this period. Others may have been deliberately attempting tactical evasion in order to avoid contact with the TF 136 force and with other U.S. surveillance-intercept elements. Whatever the case, throughout November 1 and 2, the four Soviet ships then in the quarantine area continued to alternate between proceeding on course and stopping for several hours. For example, the BELOVODSK was reported under way again as of 1827 Washington time on 1 November.¹ Later, during the night, the GROZNYI also got under way, but by that time the BELOVODSK was once again dead in the water.²

610. On 2 November, CINCLANTFLT directed the quarantine commander to continue present actions, with at least one destroyer assigned to trail each of four Soviet ships -- the tankers MIR, KARL MARX, and GROZNYI and the merchant ship BELOVODSK -- until otherwise directed.³ The GROZNYI once more was dead in the water, with one destroyer maintaining surveillance. The BELOVODSK again was under way, headed for Cuba, with the destroyers trailing. The quarantine task force commander had directed that air surveillance only be maintained over the KARL MARX. It was anticipated that a destroyer escort would be provided for this Soviet tanker when it approached closer to the areas in which DD's not already assigned to trail duty were operating.⁴

¹CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

²CTF 136 message to CINCLANTFLT, 020236Z November 1962, TOP SECRET. CTF 136 message to CINCLANTFLT, 020312Z November 1962, TOP SECRET.

³CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

⁴Ibid.

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611. On the morning of 3 November, the CNO instructed CINCLANTFLT by telephone to trail only those ships suspected of carrying prohibited materiel or specifically designated by higher authority and to refrain from trailing every ship in the area of the quarantine line. At 1108 Washington time, this instruction was modified to become effective after completion of the trailing of the four Soviet ships -- the GROZNY, the KARL MARX, the MIR, and the BELOVODSK -- currently under surveillance.¹ Hence, a less dramatic version of the command arrangements which had been utilized during the first three days of the quarantine were once more put into effect. Tactical decisions earlier delegated to CINCLANTFLT again were to be taken at a higher echelon of the chain of command.

612. Late in the day the BELOVODSK entered a Cuban port without having been stopped. The destroyer which had been trailing this merchant ship was returning to its assigned station in the quarantine line.² Destroyers from TF 136 continued to trail the Soviet tanker MIR, again en route to Havana, and the Soviet tanker GROZNY, once more under way and en route to Santiago. By 0635 Washington time on 4 November the GROZNY was reported to have entered port at Santiago.³

613. By 3 November the first phase of the quarantine had begun to draw to a close, with no attempt having been made by the USSR to challenge the embargo. Although an occasional intercept of an inbound ship was to occur thereafter, the CNO's verbal directive to CINCLANTFLT served to curb much of the subsequent activity of TF 136, insofar as enforcement of the quarantine was concerned. During the first phase of the quarantine, no Soviet ships with suspicious cargo had attempted to cross the quarantine line, and those of the POLTAVA class, of primary interest as intercept

¹CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

²Ibid.

³Message from USS BIGELOW to COMSOLANT, DTG 041127Z November, 1962 TOP SECRET.

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targets, had reversed their course and returned to the USSR. Therefore, inspection had been accomplished primarily by aerial reconnaissance and visual observation. Only one vessel, the Lebanese freighter MARUCLA, known to be under Soviet charter, had been stopped and boarded. Soviet ships that did enter the quarantine area had deliberately attempted to avoid contact with elements of TF 136, necessitating more search activities than originally had been anticipated. In addition, those few Soviet ships in the quarantine area during the few days immediately following Khrushchev's missile withdrawal announcement of 28 October apparently were having considerable difficulty in obtaining instructions. The fact that they would remain dead in the water, then get underway for Cuba, then stop again, seems to have reflected the uncertainty of the ships' masters as to whether to turn back or to proceed to Cuba. The second phase of TF 136's role in furnishing military support to help implement political decisions was about to begin.

614. However, before examining the role TF 136 played in verifying the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba, it is necessary first to discuss three other issues related to the conduct of the naval quarantine. In retrospect, all three turned out to be of far less significance to the actual implementation of the quarantine concept than the policy planners had anticipated. Nevertheless, during the crisis itself they did require the attention of the JCS, of CINCLANT and certain other Unified Commanders, and of non-military elements of the national decision-making complex. These topics are:

- a. Latin American participation in the quarantine operation
- b. Decisions on the use of the Panama Canal to support enforcement of the quarantine; and
- c. Planning for a potential air quarantine.

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615. The first two issues already have been discussed -- in a somewhat different context -- in the section of this study dealing with inter-Allied coordination during the crisis.¹ Therefore, emphasis will be placed here on examining those aspects of these two problems which were directly relevant to enforcement of the quarantine.

J. LATIN AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THE QUARANTINE

616. Very early in the crisis, as soon as a limited naval blockade began to be considered as a potential course of action, the political desirability of utilizing naval forces from Latin America to assist in its implementation was recognized by the national policy planners. Militarily, however, the concept could introduce more problems than it solved. As has been pointed out already in Chapter III of this Enclosure, the JCS and other military planners originally assumed that when the U.S. implemented whatever military course of action that might be decided upon, many Latin American nations would be plagued with Communist-inspired internal disorder. Others, the JCS felt, undoubtedly would seek to remain aloof or even to oppose the U.S. response politically. Considerable attention was being given to the problem of furnishing riot control assistance to Latin American nations through CINCARIB. Moreover communications facilities with certain Latin American nations were inadequate. An interdepartmental Executive Committee for Communications under the NSC was studying this entire problem at the time the crisis broke.²

617. [In addition, the JCS estimated that only six Latin American nations had ships suitable for use in a naval quarantine, and that even these nations were capable of no more than nominal participation. Furthermore, while the JCS considered that nominal] L-1A5

¹See Chapter IV of this Enclosure.

²In conjunction with insuring readiness for various crisis-connected contingencies, by 28 October arrangements had been made for CINCARIB to utilize CIA facilities in certain Latin American nations to handle cipher traffic as events required. (JCS Message 7074 to CINCARIB, DTG 232156Z October, 1962 SECRET.) B-1A4

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618. More important, in the eyes of the JCS, were the potential repercussions of Latin American participation in the quarantine force on command and control. If the matter of Latin American participation was pressed too far, demands that the quarantine be implemented under an international command under the aegis of the OAS would be almost inevitable. In the opinion of the JCS, such a command arrangement was totally unacceptable. Its position was that there were only two alternatives for utilizing whatever Latin American vessels that might participate. These alternatives were:

a. Such vessels could render token support, like patrolling their own coastal waters, under their respective national command systems.

b. Arrangements would have to be made to "CHOP" (change operational control of) vessels which were to play a more direct role in quarantine operations to a U.S. commander.

619. Hence, from the outset, a dichotomy existed between the political disadvantages of delaying actual participation of Latin American naval forces in the quarantine operations and the military requirements to avoid any steps which might evoke pressures for an international command under the OAS. Moreover, if Latin

¹JCSM-799-62, to the Secretary of Defense, 20 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Ibid.

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American offers of assistance were flatly refused, the negative political repercussions might be highly significant. Therefore, all problems relating to the question of Latin American cooperation in quarantine operations were, throughout the crisis, closely coordinated between the JCS, the State Department, the CNO, and the White House.]

620. Despite the fact that the OAS gave unanimous endorsement, on 23 October, to the announced U.S. course of action, offers of actual assistance were slow in materializing. As the JCS had estimated, most nations lacked the operational capability required for active participation in quarantine operations. In addition, although the military Chiefs of Staff of some Latin American nations were anxious to furnish assistance, the process of achieving the required approval of their own national political superiors was slowed down by the procedural formalities prescribed by their national laws.

621. Utilizing JCS policy guidance to provide for close cooperation with the forces of friendly nations which might offer to assist in enforcing the quarantine, CINCLANT, quite early in the crisis, began to develop plans for a surface quarantine force for the southern approaches to Cuba. Whatever South American forces were made available were to serve in this force, which would be designated TF 137 and commanded by CONSOLANT. TF 137, when established, would remain under the direct operational control of CINCLANT, and only ships designated by CINCLANT would be intercepted. This CINCLANT plan was transmitted to the JCS for approval on 26 October.

622. Even prior to the crisis, the negative views of the JCS on the concept of utilizing an international command under the aegis of the OAS for Cuba contingency operations had been made known to]

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[the Secretary of Defense in other contexts. Nevertheless, the matter was raised again when immediate offers of assistance were not forthcoming after the President's speech. Pressures on the JCS to accept such an arrangement stemmed primarily from the fact that the State Department felt that further delay in immediate active participation by OAS nations could have adverse political effect. As of 27 October, the only firm offer of ships which had been received was from Argentina, although Venezuela had reported that it was seriously considering a formal offer of assistance. On 27 October, the JCS decided to reiterate to the Secretary of Defense its previous negative views on an international command.¹ A memorandum was forwarded the following day.²]

623. Another development on 27 October was intended, in part, to encourage Latin American participation in the quarantine. This was the designation by the Secretary of Defense of two circular interception areas for the quarantine of Cuba, effective immediately.³ One of these circular areas, with a radius of 500 n.mi. centered on Havana, established the locale in which TF 137 was to monitor the southern approaches to Cuba. Of course, at this time TF 137 had not been activated, since no Latin American forces had been made available. However, one purpose of publicly announcing the designation of the two intercept areas was to place co-equal importance on enforcing the Cuban quarantine along the southern approaches. [Hopefully, this action would serve to reassure any Latin American state considering an offer of assistance that the U.S. did not intend to denigrate the operational significance of such help to its own superior military forces.]

¹JCS 2304/75, decision on -- 27 October 1962, SECRET.

²JCSM-835-62, to the Secretary of Defense, 28 October 1962, SECRET.

³J-3 briefing for CJCS, 290300R October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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624. The other purposes underlying the Secretary of Defense directive were unrelated to the problem of Latin American participation. The second circular area designated by the Secretary of Defense corresponded to, and lengthened, the original intercept arc along which the principal quarantine force, TF 136, already was operating. This expansion of the intercept area to encompass a circle with a 500-n.mi. radius centered at Cape Maysi was intended to permit TF 136 greater freedom of action in carrying out the quarantine operations. The Secretary of Defense objected to the limitations imposed on trail and interception of contacts which, in his opinion, had existed earlier because the quarantine line on which TF 136 destroyers were assigned patrol stations was of limited length. The third purpose of the Secretary of Defense directive was to increase psychological and political pressures on the Soviets by stressing that Cuba now was completely encircled by the U.S. naval quarantine. This, of course, was a political rather than a military consideration, since it was operationally impossible for TF 136 effectively to patrol the entire area for which it now was responsible. This Secretary of Defense directive was transmitted to CINCLANT by the JCS for immediate implementation, insofar as it affected TF 136, and for the guidance of TF 137 if and when the latter force became operational.¹

625. By 31 October, the JCS had approved CINCLANT's OPLAN for TF 137, and CINCLANT had designated COMSOLANT (U.S. Commander, South Atlantic) as the commander of this "paper" Latin American/U.S. Combined Task Force.²

626. COMSOLANT utilized to advantage the time which elapsed between his formal designation as Commander, TF 137, and the arrival of Latin American ships ready for sea duty. During this

¹JCS Message 7050, DTG 272012Z October 1962 CONFIDENTIAL.

²JCS SITREP 9-62 as of 310500Z October, 1962 page 6; transmitted as JCS Message 7130, DTG 310900Z October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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period, he augmented his normally small staff and improved communications facilities at his headquarters. [There was a requirement for U.S. Communications Liaison Teams to serve aboard whatever Latin American ships might report to his OPCON, and only a limited number of specialists with the required cryptographic and linguistic abilities were on active duty in the U.S. Navy. Through temporary reassignment of personnel with the necessary combination of talents from duty at posts as far away as Rota, Spain, a sufficient number of Communications Liaison Teams were formed. These teams later carried their own crypto systems aboard the Latin American ships which ultimately participated in TF 137 operations, and communications between the ships on patrol and COMSOLANT's headquarters were satisfactory.]

627. By 1 November, the Dominican Republic had reported two frigates to the operational control of COMSOLANT for planning purposes. These were under repair, since evaporator failures limited their immediate operational usefulness. Two Venezuelan destroyers also reported to the OPCON of COMSOLANT for planning purposes on the same day; these were supposed to be ready for sea duty by 2 November. On 8 November, two Argentine DD's reported to the OPCON of COMSOLANT ready for duty.² The only other Latin American nation formally offering naval units was Guatemala, which on 18 November promised a frigate. It was to be ready for sea 7 December.³ Meantime, the quarantine had been lifted, so the vessel never participated.

628. It was not until 12 November that the ships assigned to TF 137 departed Trinidad to begin patrol duty at sea. Before operations could commence, it had been necessary to translate into

¹LANTCOM, Headquarters of the Commander in-Chief. "CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)," 29 April 1963, TOP SECRET, pages 127-131.

²JCS SITREP of 010500Z November, transmitted as JCS Message 7147, DTG 010944Z November, TOP SECRET; "Summary of Latin American Offers of Forces and Facilities (U)," USN OP-63 Memo 00395-62, 12 November 1962, SECRET.

³CINCLANT message DTG 182338Z November 1962 to COMSOLANT, CONFIDENTIAL.

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Spanish COMSOLANT's OPORD 9-62, which spelled out the operational concepts which were to govern TF 137's activities. This was accomplished at Trinidad with the assistance of officers assigned to the Argentine ships which had reported to COMSOLANT's OPCON on 8 November.¹

629. Between the time it began operations and the lifting of the quarantine, TF 137 reported a total of 153 contacts.² However, ships of interest en route to Cuba were not utilizing the southern approach which TF 137 was responsible for patrolling. By the time the ships in the task force had reached their stations, the crisis already was drawing to a close. All the Soviet merchant ships returning dismantled missiles to the USSR had departed Cuba and had been inspected. Therefore, the only actual intercept which CINCLANT directed CTF 137 to carry out involved the ANGELOS. On 17 November, CINCLANT directed that the ANGELOS be intercepted, photographed, and visually observed. If no prohibited materiel was in evidence, the trail of the ship was to be discontinued.³ The ANGELOS was intercepted the same day. It cooperated fully, reported its cargo to the intercepting TF 137 ship, and was cleared to proceed on course.⁴ Three days later, the quarantine was lifted. CINCLANT directed COMSOLANT to cease TF 137 operations and to consider the desirability of carrying out combined maneuvers before returning the Latin American vessels to their respective national OPCON's.⁵

530. Since events had unfolded as they did, the role of TF 137 during the enforcement of the quarantine had proved to be of little operational significance. The creation of TF 137 did achieve, to

¹LANTCOM, Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, "CINCLANT Historical Account of the Cuban Crisis, 1962 (U)," 29 April 1963, TOP SECRET, p. 128.

²Ibid., p. 129.

³CINCLANT message DTG 170516Z November 1962 to Commander, TF 137, information copies to CTF 136, CNO JCS and CINCLANTFLT, CONFIDENTIAL

⁴CTF 137 message DTG 171430Z November, 1962, to CINCLANT, information copies to JCS, CNO, JACE's, et al., CONFIDENTIAL.

⁵CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

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some extent, the desired political purpose, even though the widespread Latin American participation hoped for by the President never materialized. [Most important of all, the existence of TF 137 did not jeopardize the operational efficiency of the principal quarantine force, TF 136. (Before the command arrangements which were to be applied at the tactical level had been developed by CINCLANT, this possibility had engendered considerable concern among the military planners.) Similarly, the difficulties for command and control which might have stemmed from demands for the creation of an international command under the OAS, which the JCS felt must be avoided at all costs, never became a serious problem. Nor did the saturation of communications facilities at his Trinidad headquarters which COMSOLANT had thought might occur as a consequence of the existence of TF 137 ever take place.¹

[Sufficient U.S. personnel and cryptographic equipment to meet the requirement for Communications Liaison Teams aboard the few Latin American ships which participated were made available to COMSOLANT. (Had Latin American participation been more widespread, this conceivably could have become a serious problem.)]

631. The requirement closely to coordinate all policy guidance concerning the role of Latin American forces in quarantine operations between the State Department, the White House, the OSD, the JCS, and the CNO did add one more item to the already heavy agenda of policy planners. However, this did not seem to have any serious negative effects on the decision-making process, which obviously was dealing simultaneously with a complex of far more important issues. In addition, message traffic was increased by the decision to furnish detailed policy guidance from the highest levels to the military attaches and State Department personnel involved in the complicated negotiations with Latin American countries which were conducted as a follow-up to all formal and

¹COMSOLANT message DTG 051932Z November 1960 to CINCLANT, requesting top level Navy support for his efforts to improve communications facilities, TOP SECRET.

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informal offers of assistance. However, despite the shortage of secure communications facilities linking Washington with field personnel in Latin American states, this analysis has uncovered no serious communications saturation problems which can be attributed primarily to the increase in message traffic stemming from this aspect of crisis-related activity.

632. Insofar as Latin American participation in the quarantine operations was concerned, then, the necessary delicate balance between political and military desiderata, which were diametrically opposite, was successfully maintained. However, if the nations of Latin America had designated a larger number of their ships to participate, far greater command and control problems than the few minor ones actually experienced probably would have arisen.

K. USE OF THE PANAMA CANAL TO SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT OF THE QUARANTINE

633. Soon after CINCLANT had received from the JCS the initial rules of engagement and virtual OPLAN for the quarantine, he proposed to the JCS that the rules of engagement be modified to permit supplementary use of the Panama Canal in the conduct of quarantine operations. CINCLANT suggested that CINCARIB be directed to assume responsibility for searching suspected ships transiting the Canal and for developing measures to prevent the transit of ships found to be carrying prohibited materiel.¹ Ultimately, it was decided that the political disadvantages of prohibiting ships carrying forbidden materiel from transiting the Canal would outweigh the operational advantages, which were in any event somewhat dubious, given CINCARIB's other potential missions and limited forces.²

634. On 26 October, therefore, the JCS reversed an earlier acceptance of CINCLANT's suggestion and instructed CINCLANT and

¹ CINCLANT message to JCS, DTG 222234Z October, 1962, TOP SECRET.

² The political aspects of the problems raised by CINCLANT's proposal to use the Canal Zone in support of quarantine operations have been discussed in more detail in Chapter IV of this Enclosure.

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CINCARIB that enforcement measures for carrying out the quarantine were not to be taken in the Canal Zone. Inspection of cargo, as provided in the rules of engagement spelled out in previous JCS messages for the quarantine force itself, was to be undertaken at the Canal Zone. However, only ships designated by CINCLANT for inspection at the Canal were to be interfered with. Even if inspection was directed, ships were not to be delayed in transiting the Canal merely because prohibited materiel had been discovered aboard. Unless such materiel threatened the security of the Canal Zone, they were to be permitted to proceed. If security was threatened, the procedures contained in a joint State/Defense Department Instruction dated May 10, 1957, concerning transit of the Panama Canal by Sino-Soviet Bloc vessels, were to be followed. When inspections were carried out at the request of CINCLANT, he was to be informed of the results. If prohibited materiel was found aboard such ships, CINCARIB was to maintain air surveillance over these vessels upon their departure from the Canal Zone. This surveillance was to continue until the vessels were beyond the range of CINCARIB's surveillance aircraft or until CINCLANT accepted responsibility for further action.¹

635. On 28 October, CINCLANT designated the ship EMELIAU PUGACHEV for inspection upon its arrival to transit the Panama Canal.² The ship was not scheduled to arrive at the Canal until about 3 November. At 1330Z on 3 November, the inspection requested by CINCLANT was carried out. The ship carried canned fish, fish oils and lumber; no prohibited cargo was discovered. It was permitted to proceed to Havana, ETA 7 November.³

636. CINCLANT designated no further vessels for inspection by CINCARIB. None of the ships carrying the dismantled missile back

¹JCS Message 7002 to CINCLANT and CINCARIB, DTG 261217Z October 1960 SECRET. Information to Governor, Canal Zone, CNO, Service Chiefs, etc

²"OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events, 280000Z to 290000Z October," 30 October 1960 TOP SECRET.

³CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

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to the USSR utilized a route requiring transit of the Panama Canal, and throughout the quarantine most other shipping of interest also was using other routes. Therefore, as the crisis drew to a close, the nature of the Soviet response had been such that the decision to minimize utilization of the Canal Zone for inspection and surveillance of Cuban-bound ships before they had entered the designated intercept area had caused no operational difficulties. The potential negative political repercussions which undoubtedly would have occurred if the JCS had not withdrawn its initial approval of CINCLANT's original suggestion had been successfully avoided.

L. THE ABORTIVE PLAN FOR AN AIR QUARANTINE

637. Soon after the onset of the crisis, one of the alternative courses of action under active consideration was the imposition of an air quarantine, designed to prevent the introduction into Cuba of prohibited materiel by airlift as well as by seallift. As has been pointed out already, the original guidance transmitted by the JCS to CINCLANT directed that he develop plans for an air quarantine of Cuba as well as for a naval quarantine.¹ The rules of engagement, as transmitted to CINCLANT, contained fairly detailed instructions concerning interception of aircraft.

638. CINCLANT had developed a plan for an air blockade of Cuba earlier, in conjunction with planning related to Soviet fanfanning of tensions over Berlin. Although some modifications were required to ensure that this plan was tailored to the new JCS guidance, it did furnish a basis for developing an OPLAN for a limited air quarantine of Cuba. By 23 October, this plan, CINCLANT OPLAN 308-62, was forwarded to the JCS for approval.²

¹JCS Message 6949 to CINCLANT, DTG 221111Z October 1962 TOP SECRET.

²CINCLANT message to JCS, DTG 231904Z October 1962 SECRET.

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639. Meanwhile, planning for a limited air quarantine of Cuba was going on within the JCS itself. The Deputy Secretary of Defense had requested the views of the JCS on this matter on 19 October, and several papers had been developed within J-3 for JCS consideration. Hence, planning for the air quarantine, in contrast to planning for the naval quarantine, was accomplished by the JCS organization in accordance with standard procedures. (The details of planning for the naval quarantine, it will be recalled, were carried out within the office of the CNO.)

640. Since the original JCS policy guidance to CINCLANT had included references to an air as well as to a sea quarantine, some confusion apparently arose as to whether or not the JCS order to implement the naval quarantine, issued on 23 October, was intended to apply as well to the quarantine of aircraft. CINCONAD requested clarification. On 24 October, the JCS explicitly informed CINCLANT and CINCONAD that its order of the previous day directing implementation of the quarantine did not apply to the quarantine of aircraft. CINCLANT would be advised if implementation of an air quarantine was desired.¹

641. Meanwhile, on the 23rd, CINCLANT had released his OPLAN 308-62 (Limited Air Blockade) for planning purposes only. Two days later, he amended the command arrangements in the original OPLAN to provide explicitly that no aircraft not designated by CINCLANT was to be intercepted or interfered with. CINCLANT would designate each aircraft suspected of carrying prohibited material and would, in each instance, state explicitly what kind of action, if any, was required.²

642. On 27 October, CINCLANT promulgated his OP Order 49-62 concerning the limited air quarantine of Cuba. The OP order was

¹JCS Message 6945, DTG 241823Z October, 1960 SECRET.

²CINCLANT message, DTG 231904Z October 1960 to JCS and LANTCOM Component Commanders, SECRET; CINCLANT message, DTG 251705Z October 1960 to JCS and LANTCOM Component Commanders, SECRET.

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effective for planning upon receipt and for execution upon direction. The command arrangements outlined by CINCLANT were as follows:

a. The two execution commanders would be the commander of TF 84 (COMCARIBSEAFRON) and the commander of TF 135 (COMCARDIV 2).

b. COMCARIBSEAFRON would be responsible for the limited air quarantine in the area east of Cuba, utilizing the forces available to him and whatever Puerto Rican National Guard Forces were made available by COMANTDEFCON.

c. COMCARDIV 2 would be responsible for the limited air quarantine in the area south and east of Cuba with the forces assigned to him.

d. CINCONAD would assist within the vicinity of the coastal ADIZ or within the range of his air defense systems.¹
Later, at the direction of the JCS, details concerning additional support from CINCSAC and command liaison between CINCSAC and CINCLANT were added.²

643. Meanwhile, the J-3 plan and recommendations concerning an air quarantine of Cuba had gone "green". At their meeting of 27 October, the JCS decided to forward the plan to the Secretary of Defense along with other recommendations related to the air quarantine.³ The plan was forwarded on 29 October. The JCS OPLAN also was transmitted the same day (29 October) to CINCLANT, CINCSAC and CINCONAD for their information. The same message approved, for planning purposes, CINCLANT OPLAN 303-62, as modified by the JCS plan.⁴ The JCS concept of operations

¹"OPNAV 24-Hour Resume of Events, 270000-280000Q October," TOP SECRET.

²SAC OPORD 100-63, effective for planning upon receipt and for implementation if directed by Headquarters SAC. Transmitted as SAC message to various subordinate commands, information JCS, CINCONAD, CINCLANT, et al., DTG 072230Z November, TOP SECRET. (AF In log numbers for the message, which was transmitted in four sections, are AF In 15509, 15510, 15516, 15515, and 15515, all dated 8 November 1962.)

³JCS 2304/77, October 1962, pages 554 to 564 inclusive, TOP SECRET.

⁴JCS Message 7080, DTG 291710Z October 1962 TOP SECRET.

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envisaged that, as a first step, all possible diplomatic pressure should be exerted in order to prevent aircraft transporting Soviet Bloc materiel from being allowed to use the customary en route refueling bases on non-Communist territory. In addition, the JCS plan provided that CINCONAD and CINCSAC were to assist in enforcing the quarantine along the route from Gander to Cuba. They also would assist CINCLANT in enforcing the quarantine along the southern transatlantic and Caribbean air routes. The JCS memorandum of transmittal pointed out to the Secretary of Defense that, in the view of the JCS, the Presidential Proclamation of 23 October clearly authorized an air quarantine of Cuba if the Secretary of Defense decided that it was necessary.¹

644. Soon after the crisis arose, the State Department, as part of its efforts to gain the participation of other nations in the U.S. response to the Soviet missile build-up, had begun to take steps to encourage Canada, the U.K., and other nations to deny landing rights to Soviet aircraft transiting to Cuba. This effort was successful. [The resultant administrative harassment was considered by the JCS to be sufficiently effective.]²

645. Therefore, no requirement for implementing an air quarantine developed. In fact, the Secretary of Defense did not formally approve the JCS plan until 14 December, after the quarantine had been lifted. Even then, the plan was approved for planning purposes only, and with the rules of engagement modified to provide that authority to order an attack was to be retained by the JCS and was not to be delegated to CINCLANT.³

646. In summary, the concept of an air quarantine never was actually applied during the crisis. In sharp contrast to the

¹JCSM-832-62 to the Secretary of Defense, dated 29 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Message 7184 to CINCONAD, DTG 021948Z November 1962, SECRET.

³JCS 2304/125, 17 December 1962, page 779, TOP SECRET.

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arrangements utilized for planning and implementing the naval quarantine, with the CNO serving as the designated JCS representative, the planning for an air quarantine followed a more conventional pattern. The bulk of the planning was accomplished within the JCS organization itself. Had the Soviet response to the imposition of the naval quarantine been different, and had the USSR decided to mount a massive airlift in defiance of the naval quarantine the U.S. had imposed, plans for such a contingency existed. They could have been implemented promptly.

M. THE ROLE OF TF 136 IN VERIFYING WITHDRAWAL OF SOVIET MISSILES

647. In order to relate the activities of the principal quarantine force -- TF 136 -- to pertinent aspects of the decision-making process during the latter part of the crisis, it is necessary to resume the chronological account which was interrupted to deal with other topics.

648. From 7 November until the crisis was over, TF 136 had a dual mission. Although it continued to enforce the quarantine on the importation of prohibited materiel into Cuba, its principal activities from that date onward were directed towards verifying the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. This additional role for TF 136 had not been anticipated by the policy planners.

649. Even prior to Khrushchev's announcement, on 28 October, that he had ordered the IRBM's and ICBM's in Cuba dismantled and returned to the USSR, negotiations had been going on at the U.N. and elsewhere to establish acceptable arrangements for verification of the withdrawal of the missiles. After Khrushchev's announcement, the JCS increased its efforts to ensure that any verification arrangements agreed to politically also would meet minimum military requirements.¹

¹See, e.g., JCS 2304/81, 30 October 1962 pages 602-607, inclusive, SECRET; JCSM-862-62 to the Secretary of Defense, 2 November 1962, SECRET.

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higher authority. At the highest levels of politico/military decision making, attention had shifted away from the question of enforcing the quarantine; the verification problem had become a more acute immediate issue. CINCLANT took advantage of this lull in operations in the quarantine area to work out an improved means of designating merchant ships which were under surveillance, were being trailed, or otherwise were of interest to the quarantine force. [On 5 November, he suggested the "SCOTCH TAPE" code word numbering system. The proposal was approved by the JCS on 7 November, when CINCLANTFLT was authorized to assign and cancel SCOTCH TAPE numbers as required by developments.¹ Thereafter, until the quarantine was lifted, both outbound missile-bearing ships and incoming merchant vessels -- Soviet and non-Soviet -- were assigned SCOTCH TAPE numbers. This designation system served as a convenient means of tabulating the data required simultaneously to monitor incoming merchant ships and to inspect outbound vessels with missiles aboard. It permitted more precise communications concerning the ships of interest between the various echelons of the command and control structure, particularly at the tactical level.

654. By the time the "SCOTCH TAPE" designation system was adopted the basic points of a bilateral inspection agreement acceptable to both the U.S. and the USSR had been hammered out at the U.N. After intelligence evidence had begun to indicate that the Soviet Union was preparing to withdraw its missiles from Cuba, the U.S. had initiated the attempt to obtain a bilateral agreement, since there seemed to be no immediate prospects for creating an acceptable multilateral U.N.-sponsored inspectorate.]

655. U.S.-Soviet agreement on the inspection issue was achieved in New York on 6 November. The following day, at the request of the Secretary of Defense, the JCS directed CINCLANT to apply the

¹JCS Message 7266 to CINCLANT, DTG 071557Z November 1962 CONFIDENTIAL.

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terms of reference which had been agreed to at the political level, to all future inspections of both outgoing and incoming Soviet ships. The details spelled out in the bilateral agreement included:

- a. Requirements for an exchange of call signs between intercepting and intercepted vessels in order to establish rendezvous;
- b. Authorization for U.S. ships to pass close aboard the outgoing Soviet ships taking missiles back to the USSR in order to photograph them; and
- c. Permission to use helicopters in obtaining close-up photographs.¹

On the 7th, the JCS also informed CINCLANT that close surveillance and photography of each of the Soviet ships departing Cuban ports with missiles aboard was a matter of high priority. CINCLANT was directed to arrange for rapid delivery of all photos to the JCS Joint Reconnaissance Center for interpretation.²

656. Although there had been some uncertainty among U.S. intelligence experts about the number of missiles actually deployed to Cuba, by this time (7 November), the Soviet figure of 42 MRBM's was accepted as probably accurate. Photoreconnaissance had not indicated the presence of any IRBM's in Cuba. These presumably were to have been shipped after the sites that were under construction had been completed. Some may have been aboard the POLTAVA-class ships which turned back to the Soviet Union shortly after the quarantine was imposed.

657. TF 136, along with other elements of LANTCOM and with assistance from SAC and other commands, began to carry out the inspection mission.

¹JCS Message 7266 to CINCLANT, DTG 071557Z November, 1962 CONFIDENTIAL.

²JCS Message 7264 to CINCLANT, DTG 071519Z November 1962 SECRET.

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658. The following day (8 November), a Soviet spokesman at the U.N. announced that:

a. All outbound Soviet ships would follow the same course, i.e., via the Straits of Florida.

b. Nine Soviet ships, the names of which had been given to the U.S., would be carrying all 42 missiles. The missiles themselves would be on deck, covered with canvas.

c. Shipmasters of the nine vessels had been instructed to inform U.S. quarantine forces as to the number of missiles on board. This, the Soviets felt, was adequate.

d. The Soviets had no objection to the U.S. use of helicopters for very close-in photography.

e. If necessary, the canvas covers of the missiles could be removed.

f. There was no need to give the U.S. the call signs of the Soviet missile-bearing ships, since the names had already been revealed.¹

659. The Soviet spokesman's assertions did not prove to be entirely accurate. Call signs of at least nine of the Soviet outbound vessels were obtained and furnished to CINCLANT. The missiles themselves proved to be carried aboard eight Soviet merchant ships. (The ninth ship carried only associated support equipment.) Outbound Soviet vessels did not always follow the course through the Florida Straits which had been agreed upon, necessitating considerable search activity before a rendezvous could be arranged.² However, between 8 and 11 November, all nine ships reported by the Soviets to be carrying missiles had been intercepted, and 42 missiles counted. When intercepting, the U.S. forces followed the instructions of the Secretary of Defense, signaling to the Soviet vessels, "Your government has agreed to uncover missiles. Please do so."³

¹JCS Message 7-23 to CINCLANT, DTG 081501Z November 1962, UNCLASSIFIED.

²CNO Flag Plot Log, TOP SECRET.

³JCS Message 7306 to CINCLANT, DTG 090002Z November 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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560. Once a rendezvous had been arranged, the cooperation of the Soviet shipmasters varied. Some removed part of the canvas outer coverings of the missile transporters without even waiting for a request from the intercepting force. Others refused to uncover missiles at all, or removed only a small portion of the outer coverings. In no case was the inner waterproof casing around a missile removed.

561. Shortly after TF 136 had completed its unanticipated role in verifying the withdrawal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba, an additional group of vessels had left Bloc ports and were headed for Cuba. By 13 November, there were 17 such incoming ships. Sixteen were of Soviet registry, and one was an East German vessel. Two of the Soviet ships were estimated to be capable of carrying missiles below deck. These were expected to arrive in the quarantine area on 16 and 17 November.

562. The CNO, in a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, pointed out that considerable time had elapsed since any Bloc ship inbound to Cuba had been intercepted. He recommended that the following steps be taken:

a. The Yugoslav tanker, IZ, due at the quarantine area on 14 November, be intercepted;

b. Each of the incoming Soviet cargo ships be intercepted, beginning with the ATKARSK, due at the quarantine area on 15 November;

c. Priority be given to ensure the intercept of the two incoming Soviet ships, the OKHOTSK and the ORENBURG, with 72-foot hatches, which were considered capable of carrying missiles in their holds;

d. A public announcement be made that the Norwegian ship TRAJAN, inbound to Cuba, had been intercepted and boarded on 12 November; and

e. [REDACTED] B1/45

Attachment to JCS 2304/1CO, dated 14 November 1962, pp. 671-673, inclusive, TOP SECRET.

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668. Difficulties over removal of IL-28's were to continue for some time. A Soviet spokesman announced to a U.S. representative at the U.N. on 4 December that 42 IL-28's would be shipped out on December 5, 6, and 7.¹ The first sightings of outbound IL-28's were made on the 6th. The fuselages, crated and uncrated, were on deck, and an accurate count was achieved. Although all IL-28's were not removed at once, the quarantine was deemed to have achieved its purpose and the Cuban crisis had ended. The nature of the Soviet response had been so different from what had been anticipated that no requirement had arisen to apply the elaborate rules of engagement worked out during the critical week of 15 October.

N. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

669. The principal external influences on military command and control related to naval quarantine operations proved to cluster within two categories. Both in form and in function, command and control had to adapt to requirements imposed by:

a. The decisions and actions of U.S. national (civilian) authority, and

b. The behavior patterns of the principal antagonist - the USSR.

These determined to a large extent what kind of command and control structure emerged and how its processes would operate.

The Nature of the Crisis and the Role of the Quarantine in the Total U.S. Response

670. Precrisis planning for a Cuban contingency had been based primarily on the assumption that the principal antagonist would be the Castro regime. After it became apparent that the main confrontation would be between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the alternative courses of action for dealing with the emergency took

¹JCS Cuba SITREP 44-62, 050400Z November, TOP SECRET.

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673. The quarantine operations, then, were pivotal in the overall national strategy for dealing with the crisis. Subsequent decisions regarding all other U.S. moves were dependent upon the interplay of events which followed its imposition. Simultaneously, it was imperative to coordinate the operational activities of the quarantine task force with the U.S.-Soviet political dialogue. At any given point during the crisis, thus, quarantine command and control was subordinate to considerations other than the immediate military operations at hand.

Command and Control of Unilateral Quarantine Operations

674. When the original quarantine task force (TF 136) was established by CINCLANT it was assumed that standard command relations would apply. However, even prior to implementation of the naval quarantine, it proved necessary to adjust command and control of TF 136 to the evolving strategy of the national decision-makers. Later, requirements for yet other revisions in command arrangements for TF 136 stemmed primarily from the operational moves of the USSR.

675. Two U.S. developments occurring quite early in the crisis necessitated the initial adjustments. The first was the designation of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) as JCS representative for quarantine operations (and defense of Guantanamo as well) the second was the shroud of special security restrictions that was thrown over some intelligence relevant to quarantine operations, a shroud which did not begin to be lifted until after all the principal Soviet targets for initial interception had turned away from Cuba.

676. The decision to designate the CNO to serve as JCS representative for naval quarantine operations, taken on 19 October, precipitated a series of departures from the established institutional patterns of national command and control. They necessitated a partial and temporary modification of the usual intermediary command channels linking the President with LANTCOM forces, which indirectly caused secondary changes in staff organization and procedures.

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677. Advantages accruing from the designation of the CNO as JCS representative for the quarantine were:

a. Facilitating, during the critical initial week of national decision making, timely coordination between the CNO and CINCLANT -- and their respective staffs -- on operational matters that by their nature were almost exclusively within the purview of a single Service;

b. Freeing the Joint Battle Staff and other elements of the JCS organization to concentrate on preparations for more drastic military action which might become necessary momentarily.

678. The CNO's designation as JCS representative also imposed several requirements for adaptation of existing OJCS structure and processes:

a. Partial alteration of the role of the JCS as a corporate entity -- and the concomitant role of the Joint Staff and OJCS -- in that part of the crisis decision-implementation process which pertained to the quarantine;

b. Transference to OPNAV, and particularly to CNO Flag Plot, of some of the operational and functional responsibilities normally assumed during a crisis by the Joint Battle Staff; and

c. Creation of a liaison group within the JCS organization specifically responsible for ensuring a smooth flow of information on quarantine developments to those echelons within the JCS which needed such information.

679. Within the Operations Directorate of the JCS, certain rearrangements in staff procedures were required, partly as a consequence of the designation of the CNO as JCS representative for quarantine operations and partly because of the imposition of special security restrictions. One important innovation that resulted was the creation within J-3 of a special Blockade (i.e., Quarantine) Group which stood watch around the clock and served as the principal liaison between OPNAV and the JCS on quarantine

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matters throughout the crisis. It was this group which kept the Office of the Chairman, the Director, J-3, and others within the Joint Staff who had a "need to know" informed about quarantine developments. Because of the special security constraints, this Blockade Group had to be set apart from the Joint Battle Staff and functioned outside the NMCC complex. After security restrictions eased, it helped to insure that the flow of quarantine data to the Joint Battle Staff from OPNAV was as complete and timely as possible. Although both the creation of the special J-3 Blockade Group and the designation of the CNO as JCS quarantine representative occasioned some difficulties within the JCS organization at the staff level, these apparently had no significant bearing on the decision-making processes of the JCS as a corporate entity.

680. The first Soviet operational reaction to the quarantine required still further adjustment of quarantine-related command and control. Certain ships assigned to TF 136 had been directed to intercept, at the very hour the quarantine went into effect (1000 EDT on 24 October), two of the sixteen POLTAVA-class Soviet ships steaming towards Cuba. Ships of this class were estimated to be capable of carrying IRBM's and MRBM's in their holds and therefore were the principal targets for interception. When it became apparent, during the night of 23 October, that some of these ships were reversing course, tactical decisions on crucial details of quarantine operations began to be taken at the highest levels in Washington. Such an innovation was considered to be essential until it could be determined whether the quarantine indeed was serving its intended purpose or whether the behavior of the POLTAVA-class ships reflected a new Soviet ploy. Hence, at this juncture, the Secretary of Defense, the CNO, and their deputies turned to the White House for instructions and transmitted the resulting revised directives regarding intercept action directly to individual commanders of ships assigned to the quarantine task force.

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681. [For several days thereafter, tactical decisions concerning details of quarantine operations continued to be taken primarily in Washington. In connection with Soviet tankers, the CNO, through his Executive Officer, again requested White House guidance on the advisability of sending ships to make intercepts. Subsequently, the President also issued policy instructions concerning the interdiction and inspection of non-Bloc ships. Both the clearing of the Soviet tanker BUCHAREST through the quarantine line without it being halted or boarded and the subsequent stopping and boarding of the Lebanese freighter MARUCLA (known to be under Soviet charter) were accomplished through a combination of initial instructions from tactical commanders and final instructions from Washington transmitted directly to the individual commanders of quarantine task force ships concerned.

682. This radical departure from established command channels upset normal information flow, thereby complicating to some extent the staff work in J-3 and other elements of the Joint Staff. However, the line commanders, from CINCLANT through the Task Force 136 Commander, apparently were kept sufficiently informed of developments in Washington to avoid conflict between operations and evolving national policy.]

683. Following the initial flurry of activity in the quarantine area, the remaining number of ships inbound to Cuba suspected of carrying prohibited materiel was limited, and tactical command decisions relating to quarantine operations reverted temporarily to CINCLANT and his subordinate commanders.

684. The second Soviet operational move potentially affecting command and control over the quarantine mission did not occur until 13 November, when it was discovered that an additional group of vessels had left Bloc ports and were headed for Cuba. However, unlike the earlier episode that culminated in the POLTAVA-class

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ships returning to the USSR, this later development necessitated no drastic adjustments of command and control processes, primarily because intervening developments at the political level had nullified the possibility of boarding and inspecting any ships inbound to Cuba. During this final stage, therefore, command and control was exercised in accordance with customary links between the JCS, CINCLANT, and his subordinate commanders.

Command and Control of Verification Operations

585. Khrushchev's concession of 28 October to withdraw the missiles created an unexpected new operational mission for the quarantine forces. For the next few days the attention of U.S. national decision makers was concentrated on negotiating an acceptable agreement for verifying the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from Cuba. In the interim, while negotiations were in progress, CINCLANT had been instructed by both the JCS and the CNO to avoid stopping or boarding any vessels inbound to Cuba unless so directed by higher authority. During this period activity within the quarantine area was largely confined to visual, photographic, and radar surveillance.

586. Neither the JCS nor the CNO, in his capacity as JCS representative for quarantine operations, had a direct role in the negotiations. The JCS, through recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, attempted to ensure that any inspection and verification arrangements agreed to politically also would meet minimum military requirements. Once a U.S.-Soviet agreement spelling out in some detail the way in which U.S. forces were to inspect ships outbound from Cuba with missiles aboard had been hammered out, the JCS informed CINCLANT of this high-priority verification mission, and directed that it be accomplished with strict adherence to the terms of the bilateral inspection agreement. Since no ships could be boarded, tactical decisions were routine and were taken within LANTCOM.

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687. Only timely coordination between diplomacy and related military activities -- notably photoreconnaissance of Cuba -- had prevented the Soviets from dragging out the inspection negotiation at the U.N. while removing their missiles from Cuba, thereby precluding any verification whatsoever of missile withdrawal. In carrying out the unanticipated inspection mission, the quarantine task force, reinforced by other LANTCOM elements and assisted by SAC and certain other commands, was able to confirm to the satisfaction of U.S. decision makers the return to the Soviet Union of all 42 MRBM's which intelligence accepted as a "probably accurate" count of the total number deployed to Cuba.

Multilateral Quarantine Operations

688. Latin American participation in the quarantine was late and modest. The few ships that were made available became part of TF 137, but several command and control requirements had to be satisfied before they could begin patrol duty at sea. U.S. communications liaison teams with portable cryptographic equipment and bilingual operators had to be organized and assigned to duty aboard each vessel. [Sufficient teams were assembled to provide operationally adequate and secure communications without compromise of U.S. cryptographic security. More foreign ships could have become a serious problem.]

689. Not until 12 November did the TF 137 vessels depart Trinidad and begin patrolling the southern approaches to Cuba. Though as Soviet ships were not using southern routes, CINCLANT directed only one token intercept. The ship designated was not suspected of carrying prohibited cargo and, at CINCLANT's direction, was not boarded.

690. Since widespread Latin American participation in the quarantine operations never eventuated, TF 137 proved to be of little

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operational significance. Its activation had no appreciable impact on quarantine command and control.

691. Many adjustments had been necessary to adapt the structure and processes of command and control to the exigencies of the quarantine. Despite their great number, the speed with which they were improvised, and their sometimes dramatic divergence from standard arrangements, they resulted in a military command and control capability responsive to the requirements of the national political authority.

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VII. ADJUSTING CONTINGENCY PLANS TO CRISIS REQUIREMENTS

A. THE CUBAN CONTINGENCY PLANS IN RELATION TO THE CRISIS SITUATION

692 Despite its precipitate onset, the Cuban crisis had not caught the U.S. unprepared as far as contingency military plans were concerned. [There was in existence the so-called "family" of plans that had been evolving over the preceding 18 months. Incomplete and in various stages of refinement, they were, nonetheless, not inappropriate to the kind of situation that had materialized. Patently, they did not cover all of the military aspects of that situation, for it had turned out to be considerably different from the relatively simple localized contingency that had been anticipated by the national decision authorities and on which military planning had been predicated. The introduction of the USSR as a major term in the equation, besides radically altering the political context, exacerbated immeasurably the whole operational environment of any military action toward Cuba. On the one hand, the Soviet factor, with all of its escalation implications, raised the ante of such an undertaking to acute strategic proportions; on the other, it intensified and complicated the immediate tactical circumstances attending operations within Cuba itself. Yet, precisely because of the threatening presence of the offensive capability there, Cuba remained the focus of the crisis, and the contingency plans thus were central to the crucial issue around which the crisis revolved]

693. Indeed the planning retained essentially the same basic conceptual approach as before the crisis: two kinds of military courses of action against Cuba were still being planned -- air-strike operations and invasion operations. The main

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adjustments that had to be made were more in degree than in kind. But plans for such operations could never crystalize on a set of fixed reference points and achieve final form. Instead, they were in a continuous state of transition consonant with and paced by unfolding crisis events, reappraisals of crisis needs, and altered crisis objectives. Contingency planning never seemed quite able to catch up with the changing political assessments of the military situation or new policy requirements for particular military operational capabilities. Important substantive revisions kept appearing even after the prospect of implementing the plans had clearly faded.

694. Furthermore, once the planned military posture began to take overt form, planning and operations became intimately intertwined, and in some respects almost indistinguishable. Operational activity connected with prepositioning of forces and materiel in preparation for implementing the plans frequently revealed internal deficiencies within the plans or unexpected constraints upon the actions being planned for thus necessitating amendments to planning provisions. Conversely, the many modifications of planning provisions that introduced new requirements or altered terms of reference resulted in changed operational preparations. The reciprocal interplay tended to be weighted on the side of the latter.

695. Since the plans were never ordered executed, they always remained "contingency" plans, forever in the realm of hypothesis. Although their substance was governed by the ultimate criteria of operational feasibility in the event of implementation, the determining variables usually were not purely military operational considerations, as such, but devolved from the

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conditions of a larger national strategy in which the contingency plans had a supporting role. A constant revision cycle to accommodate changes in this strategic environment accordingly characterized contingency planning throughout the crisis.

696. The advent of the crisis hence did not serve to narrow the scope of contingency planning. On the contrary, it had the effect of progressively expanding the range of planning provisions, while at the same time intensifying their specificity. The magnitude of the effort, coupled with its urgency, made contingency planning one of the major preoccupations of the entire crisis, exercising the entire command and control system, from the White House to the forces in the field.

697. The same themes proved to dominate contingency planning as had been the case before the crisis. Of primary concern among these were: command relations, selective options, reaction times, and force levels. Significantly, all but the last were expressly motivated by command and control desiderata.

B. SETTling UPON AND APPROVING BASIC PLANS

698. One of the first considerations following the discovery of the missile sites, even before a national decision had been reached on what the U.S. response would be, was the state of the contingency plans. The need for military measures to eliminate the threat could be expected momentarily. In the present circumstances, the two operational courses of action to which precrisis planning had been oriented air strikes or invasion (or both), had turned out to be applicable in principle if not in specific detail. The whole complex of plans, however, was still in a somewhat amorphous evolutionary stage; the

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air-strike plans were far from complete and the invasion plans were in several versions. It was imperative that implementable plans be at hand as soon as possible. To have them, the prerequisite starting point was to settle upon a single basic plan for each of the two courses of action and get it approved. Only then could all of the explicit technical details organic to a full operation plan be systematically developed.

699. The air-strike plan, CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, as the course of action most apt to be executed first and on the shortest notice, immediately received priority attention. It will be recalled that the core of the air-strike plan was based on the USAF "ROCK FILE" plan prepared by COMTAC, which CINCLANT had accepted as a basis for his OPLAN 312 two weeks before the crisis broke. Many aspects of the 312 plan had, of course, been undergoing development since its inception the previous February. At this point, however, it consisted of little more than a general outline containing tentative statements of the mission, concept of operations, and command relations, plus identifying some of the tasks, objectives, and support requirements involved. Most of the Annexes that flesh out a plan were still missing. Consequently, few of the specific provisions governing what operations would actually be conducted, by whom, and how, were as yet defined. Other than informal approval for planning purposes, OPLAN 312-62 had not even been officially approved by JCS as the contingency operation plan for the air-strike course of action.

700. While the Executive Committee of the NSC was deliberating on national decision alternatives for the initial U.S. reaction, CINCLANT rushed to completion the basic plan of OPLAN 312.

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It contained a statement of the mission and concept of operations, and was accompanied by a new Annex A delineating tasks and specifying forces to carry them out. On 18 October the basic plan and the new Annex A, which was promulgated in the form of Change 1 to OPLAN 312-62,¹ were forwarded to the JCS for approval.¹ Late the following day (19 October) the basic air-strike plan, now officially designated CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN 312-62 (Cuba), along with Change 1 containing Annex A, was formally approved by the JCS as an operation plan for execution when directed.² This by no means proved to be the end of 312 planning; it continued throughout the crisis and, as described in later sections of this chapter, eventually reached elaborate lengths.

701. Concomitant with completion of the basic 312 plan was the updating of substantive operational provisions to reflect the most recent order-of-battle intelligence, especially the new targeting data on the missile sites. Ultimately, current targeting at the time of implementation was the crucial factor that would determine the scope and character of whatever operations were carried out. The time had now arrived when the probability of implementation was imminent. Therefore, on 18 October, even before the basic 312 plan had been approved, the JCS granted CINCLANT authority to release the special intelligence data acquired from aerial photoreconnaissance (hitherto extremely closely held information) for use at the operating level by tactical planners and aircrews, in order that the required targeting might be initiated.³ Concurrently:

¹Msg, JCS 6765 to CINCLANT (Info CINCAFLANT et al.), 182356Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Encl "A", J-3 MAL-1 (MCL-1), 21 October 1962 (Revised 1300), TOP SECRET.

³Ltr, CINCLANT to JCS, OCO200/502, "CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN 312-62 (Cuba) (S)," 18 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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the plotting of air-strike sortie configurations, scheduling, and assignment of preparatory and support responsibilities got under way.¹

702. Thus by 19 October both the essential formal and substantive bases of the OPLAN 312-62 air-strike plan had been laid and approved. There was now a specific reference point not only for the preparation of subsidiary and ancillary plans but also, as it soon turned out, for modifications amplifying or revising the original. Subsequent internal changes notwithstanding, CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN 312-62 remained the applicable air-strike plan for the duration of the crisis.

703. There was, relatively, somewhat less urgency attached to the invasion plans. For one thing, if there were to be invasion, it would be preceded by implementation of the air-strike plan above. For another, whereas air strikes would begin within hours following an execution order, the time lag intrinsic to an invasion operation was considerably greater; the interval elapsing between execution order and actual assault would amount to a grace period of at least several days. Besides, an approved invasion plan already existed, CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN 314-61 (Cuba). This OPLAN, however, was shortly to be abandoned in favor of a quicker reaction invasion plan. But the process of settling upon and obtaining formal approval of a single basic invasion plan was not by any means as clear-cut as for the air-strike plan. Nor was it accomplished nearly as quickly.

704. The beginning of the crisis had found the U.S. with two separate contingency invasion plans: OPLAN 314-61, which was

¹Msg, JCS 6804 to CINCLANT, 200140Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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complete and approved, and a quick-reaction version of it, [OPLAN 316-61], which was neither complete nor approved. For the first ten days of the crisis both the original 314 plan and the 316 quick-reaction plan were simultaneously current and undergoing parallel development; official references to invasion planning during this period usually employed the generic term ["314/316 invasion plan."] Gradually, however, through the course of the first week the 316 plan generally came to be understood as the intended invasion plan and ultimately emerged officially as such.

705. In view of Presidential insistence on minimizing lead time, the [18-day] reaction time of OPLAN/314-61 already practically ruled it out as an invasion plan under the circumstances. Yet the quick-reaction plan, [OPLAN 316-61], had not attained anything approaching final form. In fact, on the eve of the crisis it was still lacking in definition regarding how quick the quick reaction should be. There were several tentative versions of it extant, each oriented to different reaction times ranging from [two to seven days] and all in varying stages of development. The one based on [five-day] lead time was the most advanced. As the crisis began to materialize on 16 and 17 October, however, the feasibility of meeting even a [five-day] reaction time, considering the size of the forces involved in relation to the limitations in available lift capability, was immediately open to serious question. Shortly, the case against the [five-day] version, already appearing cogent enough, was to become conclusive in addition to another consideration.

706. The concept of operations of the 316 invasion plan called for the airborne phase of the assault (D-day) to commence [five days after the order to execute, to be followed two days later]

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(i.e., seven days after the order to execute, or D+2) by the amphibious assault phase. Now, in the light of growing appreciation for Cuban defense capability, the two-day spread between the two efforts to secure a lodgement on the island seemed a possibly risky fragmenting of the total initial assault strength; Cuban defensive forces might have the tactical advantage of being able to deal individually with each assault phase in turn. The airborne increment would be particularly vulnerable for the two-day period when it alone would bear the full brunt of Cuban resistance.¹ Sometime late on 17 October the JCS therefore decided that plans should be available which would provide for concerted timing of both assault phases of the operation. The next day, 18 October, the JCS accordingly instructed CINCLANT to plan for the two assault operations to be carried out simultaneously. To accommodate the new requirement, the JCS were prepared to authorize extending the reaction time of OPLAN 316 under this expanded concept to seven days -- that is, for D-day to be seven days after the order to execute.²

707. [A few hours later (early on 19 October) CINCLANT apprised his Service component commanders, and CINCSTRIKE as well, of the requirement for an expanded concept of OPLAN 316 in a seven-day version. He directed that plans be prepared accordingly, in addition to the existing five-day version, so as to provide for simultaneous airborne and amphibious assault on the seventh day after the execution order to implement the invasion plan. He stipulated that this seven-day version was to be completed by 27 October.³ This expanded concept and extended reaction

¹CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (U), 29 Apr 63, TOP SECRET.

²No record has been found of a formal JCS message transmitting these instructions, but they are referred to in several existing documents. Presumably they were conveyed by secure voice telephone directly between principals.

³Msg, CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT, CINCARLANT, CINCLANTFLT, and CINCSTRIKE, 19C628Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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[Time were confirmed by CINCLANT on 22 October when he promulgated changes in command relations for CINCLANT OPLANs.¹ These will be discussed later.

708. In addition to the technically still current (and presumably applicable) OPLAN 314-61, there were now two primary versions of 316 plans in process, because the five-day version had not been formally and explicitly set aside when the seven-day version was introduced.] The final choice of one version over the other proved not to be a deliberate decision but emerged indirectly over the next few days as an incidental by-product of deciding [between invasion plans -- OPLAN 316 versus 314.]

709. On 24 October, CINCLANT first broached the subject of settling upon a single invasion plan. [He orally proposed to the JCS that OPLAN 314 be dropped from further consideration in favor of OPLAN 316, preferably in the seven-day version.] The following day, 25 October, he formally requested the JCS to authorize that this be done. [Reasons given were that the present posture of CINCLANT forces was oriented toward execution of OPLAN 316 on the basis of seven-day reaction time. Moreover, the seven-day version of 316, in CINCLANT's judgment, compared favorably with the 314-61 plan insofar as concerted application of force being brought to bear in the initial assault phase was concerned, since it now provided for simultaneous amphibious and airborne assaults and included additional infantry battle groups to be air-landed on D-day. Furthermore, complex changes in 316, because of dislocations in ARLANT staging bases resulting from changes in the 312 air-strike plan, had been accomplished, but similar changes for 314 had]

¹Msg, CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT, CINCPACFLT, CINCPACFLT, et al. (Info JCS et al.), 222522Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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[not yet been made. Finally, CINCLANT pointed out, the re-scheduling of movements involved was very complicated and, perforce, different for the two plans.]

710. The following day, 26 October, the JCS approved CINCLANT's request to abandon further planning and preparation for OPLAN 314-61. They directed that, instead, all efforts should be concentrated on OPLAN 316-61. Significantly, however, no explicit reference was made as to which reaction-time version of OPLAN 316-61 was the one selected.² The ambiguity resulting from failure to render a specific ruling on this score at that time occasioned considerable confusion over the next two or three days. (This will be discussed later in the section of this chapter dealing expressly with the problem of reaction times.)

711. [Nevertheless, on the basis of the authorization received from JCS, CINCLANT directed on 31 October that OPLAN 314-61 be suspended, except for those portions which were applicable to OPLAN 316. Annexes D, E, F, I, K, W, and Z of 314 were henceforth to be considered Annexes of 316, while the remainder of 314 was to be relegated to "file status," with no further references to it.³ Late the same day, CINCLANT issued Change No. 5 to OPLAN 316-61, redesignating it OPLAN 316-62, in recognition of the extent of modification it had undergone and its new status as the current invasion plan.⁴ The CINCLANT message promulgating the change was repeated to various interested headquarters over the succeeding days, ultimately being repeated to the JCS on 8 November.]

¹Msg, CINCLANT to CINCARLANT and CINCLANTFLT (Info JCS et al), 260330Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 7006 to CINCLANT, 251524Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, CINCARLANT, et al., 311904Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msg, CINCLANT to CINCARLANT, et al., 010018Z, Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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712. [Thus it was not until 26 October that a single basic invasion plan was formally decided upon, and not until 31 October that CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN 316-62 (Cuba) in the seven-day reaction version was established unequivocally as the one that would govern in the event of invasion. Both the 316 invasion plan and the 312 air-strike plan, once they were approved, remained thereafter the only applicable operation plans for Cuba for the duration of the contingency. Throughout the crisis, however, these plans continuously underwent important substantive change, either in the form of revision or expansion, until well after the military phase was over.]

713. Cuban contingency planning proved to be one of the major preoccupations of the JCS. Therefore, before examining in detail the nature of the changes to the plans and the JCS role in making them, it is in order first to characterize the structure and processes that obtained in the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for carrying out the planning function in connection with the Cuban contingency. A brief explanation of the relationship of such planning to the functions of other elements of JCS involved in Cuban crisis activities also is indicated.

C. THE J-3 CUBAN PLANNERS

714. Within the Joint Staff of OJCS the staffing of actions pertaining to Cuban contingency plans continued to be performed, as before the crisis, by a special group. This group, however, was now a different one and, as large-scale military preparations began to get under way, operated progressively in less isolation than its predecessor.¹ The earlier ad hoc

¹NOTE: The information on which this description of the Cuban Planners is based has been derived primarily from interviews with various members of the J-3 staff, both from among the Cuban Planners and in other J-3 elements, whose experience during the Cuban crisis touched upon the planning matters discussed. In addition, the JCS files and other J-3 records have been a source of useful clues.

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inter-Directorate Cuba Planning Group (the so-called Johnson Group) lost its central position as the overall coordinating agency for Cuban planning for JCS, and planning activities shifted into somewhat more regular channels of the established institutional structure of JCS, largely devolving upon J-3 (except for UW Plans). Nevertheless, even within J-3 the staffing function was discharged by a separate team whose exclusive province was Cuban contingency plans.

715. It was the Combat Plans Branch of the Operations Plans Division of J-3, specifically the regional section concerned with the Atlantic-Caribbean area, that formed the nucleus of the team that assumed primary staff responsibility for Cuban contingency planning in JCS. At first only two officers, one of whom had been a key participant in the earlier precrisis group, had detailed knowledge of the plans under development and carried the staffing load. Later two other officers were added to assist them, and together the team came to be known as the Cuban Planners. They served as the JCS action officers for specific Cuban contingency planning matters, and, as JCS custodians of planning information, they kept plans currently posted, provided the planning input for the J-3 NCL, and were responsible for giving briefings on contingency plans.

716. The Cuban Planners, rather than functioning as an integral part of the Combat Plans Branch under the Operations Plans Division, operated independently of formal organizational channels directly under the Director, Operations Directorate (J-3). In fact, during the early transitional period from 16 October, when the initial military reactions to the discovery of the missiles began to take form, until 21 October, when the Joint Battle Staff was constituted, the Cuban Planners

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worked in the immediate offices of the Director (J-3). This arrangement was partly in the interest of security, but was also necessitated by the intimate involvement of the Director in Cuban planning during the crucial first days of the crisis.

717. In view of the extreme secrecy that shrouded Cuban planning before the crisis, very few individuals in JCS had been allowed to be privy to planning information. With the onset of the crisis, even tighter security restraints were applied initially, although inevitably an ever-widening circle became cognizant of the plans, in part or in one degree or another, because of "need-to-know" to perform other functions related to the plans (e.g., status of forces, troop movement tables, sea and airlift requirements, etc.). Then increasingly, as the U.S. military response to the crisis became more overt, the security sensitivity was blunted; simultaneously more of the JCS staff became involved in activities affecting or affected by the contingency plans. Nevertheless, few of the J-3 personnel who would have a role in the crisis as members of the Joint Battle Staff (JBS), the MCL Team, the Blockade Group, or in the LANT-CARIB Branch of the Current Operations Division, had anything approaching a comprehensive grasp of CINCLANT OPLANS applicable to the crisis until 19 October. At the time the Director, J-3, read in selected individuals, including most of the LANT-CARIB Branch and some of the Current Actions Center staff, on the general outline of the plans. The remainder of the CAC staff was briefed, in somewhat greater detail, by the Director the following day, 20 October.

733. When the Joint Battle Staff was activated on 21 October, most of its members still had little or no familiarity with

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the Cuban contingency plans. None of the planning officers with precrisis experience in Cuban plans were assigned to the JBS Teams. Instead, the Cuban Planners, as indicated above, remained a distinct entity separate from the Joint Battle Staff. However, shortly after the JBS was formed, the Cuban Planners did transfer the locus of their planning activity from the Director's office to the NMCC complex, occupying the Plans Plot Room next to the CAC Room where the JBS was located. The conduct of planning and the CINCLANT Contingency OPLANS themselves were thus in physical proximity to the JBS, permitting ready access to planning data as needed.

712 Throughout the crisis the functional relationship of the Cuban Planners to the JBS was on an informal basis; it followed no established procedures. At the time the JBS was activated there was no systematic briefing of its membership at large by the Planners. The Planners did, however, fill in the Team Chiefs on the substance of the current plans on 21 October, and the Team Chiefs, in turn, subsequently passed much of the information to individual members of their respective teams as background terms of reference in connection with specific problems. Thereafter, any additional JBS information requirements regarding contingency plans were met by personal ad hoc requests to the Planners whenever the occasion arose.

720. The JBS itself did not participate substantively in planning activities, other than passing action to Planners. Normally, to keep itself apprised of any action taken by JCS that might materially affect or alter Cuban plans, the JBS had to depend largely on come-back copies of outgoing JCS messages. Similarly, if an action bearing upon plans was taken outside JCS, the JBS had resort to courtesy copies of

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the information message coming into JCS, since an advance copy or regular hard copy was usually distributed to JCS as a matter of routine.

721. In practice, there was also an ancillary interpersonal exchange of information between interested parties that was especially important in cases of actions having serious impact on or significantly modifying existing planning provisions. In such event the Planners on their own initiative would alert not only the responsible JCS members but LANT-CARIB and other officers as well, advising them of any changes imminent, in process, pending, or completed.

722. The Cuban Planners were, of course, in a uniquely advantageous position to render this service. As JCS action officers for planning matters, the particular Planner involved was required to stand by during JCS meetings in the Gold Room whenever a planning item was on the agenda for JCS consideration, in order that he be available to support the action he had prepared. In the absence of a systematic debriefing procedure on JCS meetings, this action officer proved to be the chief source relied upon by other J-3 staff officers to learn what had transpired regarding planning at the JCS meeting. Imperfect as the method was, it was the only way of obtaining relatively advance warning of decisions made, issues raised, and new requirements laid on that heralded change in the basic frame of reference for current or future operations related to contingency plans.

723. Between the Cuban Planners and the LANT-CARIB Branch of the Current Operations Division, coordination was, of necessity, particularly intimate, but again informal and interpersonal.

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Rather than following explicit established procedures, the interrelationship was largely functionally self-defined, by virtue of the reciprocal influence of their respective activities and the often overlapping nature of their areas of responsibility. During the crisis, distinguishing between operational matters and planning matters was sometimes an arbitrary distinction. It followed that a compelling need for exchange of information was mutual.

724. The J-3 Cuban Planners, thus, were the focus of military contingency operation planning during the Cuban crisis for the JCS, for the Department of Defense, and for the U.S. Government. Functioning in a staff capacity, their role was an instrumental one in effecting an accommodation between the contingency plans and changing policy, on the one hand, and between contingency plans and changing military capabilities, on the other.

D. CONSOLIDATING THE COMMAND STRUCTURE

725. One of the first orders of planning concern was reappraisal of command relations provided for in contingency plans in the light of the nature of the crisis. As soon as the full implications of the Cuban situation became apparent, it was recognized that the crisis at hand was not the localized off-shore contingency on which existing provisions for tactical command arrangements had been predicated, but an ambivalent one of potentially strategic dimensions. Any limited war operations would inevitably impinge directly upon general war considerations--not solely by virtue of political context, but because of the actual presence of deployed Soviet forces and arms in the objective area; inescapably, the more serious military confrontation was directly with the USSR. Moreover, not only was a significant portion of territorial COMUS now included within the contemplated combat arena, both offensively as an operational

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base and defensively as a target, but the sheer magnitude of U.S. forces involved in prospective Cuban operations affected major CONUS commands, in some cases to the extent that the bulk of their available force resources would have to be committed in support of Cuban contingency plans. Finally, in view of the scope, gravity, and delicacy of the total situation, political requirements imposed at the Executive level could be expected to demand, to an exacting and intensive degree, a precisely controlled, discriminate responsiveness of tactical military forces to national decision-making authority.

726. In the present circumstances neither the classic organizational device of a provisional task-force command structure, nor a simple functional division of operational responsibilities according to traditional Service interests, would adequately ensure the desired measure of integrated control at the proper level. What seemed to be indicated was a centralization of control over all forces participating in contingency operations at some common point that would be on a low enough command echelon to be tactically effective, yet high enough to be directly responsive to seat-of-government direction.

727. Accordingly, early in the crisis CINCLANT, with at least tacit concurrence of the JCS, began to acquire for himself control over contingency planning and operations. But first, certain institutional obstacles had to be overcome. CINCLANT's de facto position as a Unified Commander was somewhat ambiguous with regard to joint contingency operations, especially during the transitional stage from planning to implementation of plans. Under the Unified Command Plan his de jure status was identified as that of Unified Commander. In point of fact, however, under normal conditions his command, LANTCOM, consisted of naval

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forces only, with forces of the other two Services to be included "when provided." As yet, CINCLANT had no Air Force or Army forces assigned, nor had activation of a truly joint staff fully representing all three Services been authorized for LANTCOM headquarters. Thus, although referred to as a Unified Commander, CINCLANT's situation was in reality analogous to a Specified Commander. Actually the Air Force and Army forces involved in CINCLANT's contingency plans for Cuba were part of STRICOM, under COMTAC/CINCARSTRIKE and CGCONARC/CINCARSTRIKE, respectively, and CINCSTRIKE entertained some expectations of himself exercising control of these forces when committed to operations such as those contemplated for Cuba. There were, besides, internal difficulties regarding command organization within the CINCLANT OPLANS themselves. Beginning on 18 October and over the succeeding few days the command ambiguity was resolved and deficiencies in the plans rectified by increments until the desired centralization of tactical operational control in CINCLANT was assured.

728. [Again priority attention was given to the air-strike plan. OPLANS 314-61 and 316-61 already contained provisions delineating command relationships in detail, although these were to undergo radical change shortly. In the case of OPLAN 312-62, command matters had not received much emphasis beyond geographical allocation of air-strike targets between the Navy and Air Force.] Presumably the two participating Service forces would operate independently of each other, but who would be the authority to coordinate their respective efforts, or to adjudicate wherever spheres of functional responsibility overlapped (e.g., air cover, deception and evasion, search and rescue), was not clearly defined. Indeed, how the commander

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of the Air Force strike element designated in the plan (CG, 19th Air Force) would relate to the next higher commander -- or even identifying that command echelon -- was not specified; ostensibly it would not be CJTF-122, the prospective invasion commander, for OPLAN 312-62. At this stage none of these command-relations questions were as yet satisfactorily answered and codified in 312 planning provisions.

729. On 18 October CINCLANT issued in message form Advance Change 1 to OPLAN 312-62, containing only part of the entire Change 1 that was to be issued subsequently. Advance Change 1 promulgated a wholly new Annex A (Task Organization and Forces) for 312, the substance of which was as follows:

a. The joint commander of all forces involved in 312-62 would be CINCLANT himself.

b. Forces involved in air strikes on the western half of Cuba would be under the operational control of CINCAFLANT (COMTAC) and would be organized into an Air Force Task Force commanded by the Commander, 19th Air Force. Included in this Air Force Task Force would be, besides Air Force units, one Marine Air Group at Key West and one Navy Carrier Air Group located at Jacksonville/Sanford.

c. Forces involved in air strikes on the eastern half of Cuba would be under the operational control of CINCLANTFLT and would be organized into a Naval Task Force, the commander of which would be designated by CINCLANTFLT. Included in the Naval Task Force would be, besides Navy air units, one Marine Air Group

d. Forces involved in the defense of Guantanamo in connection with OPLAN 312-62 would be under the operational control of COMANTDEFJOM and would include the Guantanamo

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Naval Base forces presently assigned (less Marine Air elements), plus reinforcement forces to consist of [one] BLT from CARIB PHIBRON, [one] Marine Infantry Battalion to be airlifted from CONUS, and any other Navy or Marine augmentation forces that might be provided.

e. Forces involved in unconventional warfare operations in connection with OPLAN 312-62 would be under the operational control of the Commander, Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force Atlantic (COMJUWTF), who would be directly responsible to CINCLANT.¹

730. The following day, 19 October, the JCS, although listed only as an information addressee in CINCLANT's message above, granted tentative approval of Advance Change 1 for planning purposes.² In the interim, on 18 October CINCLANT had forwarded to JCS the complete Change 1, accompanied by all of the current OPLAN 312-62 to which it applied.³ Late the next day, 19 October, the JCS formally approved CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, including Change 1 thereto.⁴

731. Up to this time the operational control of Air Force units committed to CINCLANT contingency plans, as well as of Army forces so earmarked, still resided under the jurisdiction of CINCSRIKE. Thus on the morning of 20 October, immediately following JCS formal approval of Change 1, the Chairman, JCS, in an "exclusive" message to CINCSRIKE and for similarly exclusive information of CINCLANT and each of the Service chiefs, alerted relevant key individuals that in the event of U.S.

¹Msg, CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT and COMANTDEFCON (Info JCS et al), 181612Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS to CINCLANT, JCS 6785, 192024Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Ltr, CINCLANT to JCS, 000200/502 "CINCLANT Contingency OPLAN 312-62 (Cuba)(S)," 18 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msg, JCS to CINCLANT, JCS 6804, 200140Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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military action against Cuba the JCS were prepared to change operational control of the Air Force and Army units included under CINCLANT OPLANS from CINCSTRIKE to CINCLANT.¹

732. Within a few hours CINCLANT effectively took the first step toward activating LANTCOM as a Unified Command headquarters. He designated COMTAC and CGUSCONARC as CINCAFLANT and CINCARLANT, respectively, to serve as interim Air Force and Army component commanders under CINCLANT for contingency planning, while CINCLANTFLT would continue as the naval component commander for both planning and operations.² At the same time CINCLANT also took important steps to overcome deficiencies in the provisions governing command relations contained within contingency plans. In the process the character of the planned command structure was altered radically.

733. That part of the former planned organization of forces participating in contingency operations that cast them into component task forces according to Service was generally retained: Commander 19th Air Force would be commander of the Air Force Task Force, COMPHIBLANT would be commander of the Navy Task Force (COMNAVTASKFOR); and CG XVIII Airborne Corps would be commander of the Army Task Force. All concerned were now advised, however, that during actual contingency operations CINCLANT would himself exercise "operational command" of each Service Task Force through his respective LANTCOM component commander.³

734. Then CINCLANT spelled out what the operational command channels were to be for each of the plans once they were ordered

¹Msg, JCS 6806, CJCS to CINCSTRIKE (Info CINCLANT, CSA, CSAF, CNO, CMC) EXCLUSIVE for Adams, Denrison, Wheeler, LeMay, Anderson, Shoup, from Taylor, 201209Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to JCS et al., 201716Z Oct 62, SECRET.

³Ibid.

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executed. In the conduct of operations incidental to implementation of the 312 air-strike plan, CINCLANT designated CINCAFANT to exercise operational control of all air units (Air Force, Navy, and Marine) that were assigned targets not related to defense of Guantanamo; control of air operations connected with defense of Guantanamo would be exercised by CINCLANTFLT through COMNAVTFOR. In the conduct of operations incidental to implementation of the 314-316 invasion plans, CINCLANT would exercise operational control of the three Service Task Forces directly through the appropriate LANTCOM component commander. Commander Joint Task Force 122 (CJTF-122) and the JTF headquarters were accordingly to be dissolved and the functions of joint commander assumed by CINCLANT himself. The earlier provisions for Commander Joint Task Force, Cuba (CJTF-Cuba) subsequent to the initial assault, however, were to remain, except for one significant change. It was CINCARLANT (CG CONARC) who was now designated to become CJTF-Cuba, when directed by CINCLANT, in lieu of the commander of the Army Task Force (CG XVIII Airborne Corps) previously designated in plans.¹ This last item reflected Department of Army proposals nominating CG CONARC/CINCARLANT to be CJTF-Cuba going back to 16 October.² The new command role of CG CONARC, however, proved to be short-lived and, as discussed later, soon was rescinded.

735. Another aspect of command arrangements that also had to be considered was the relationship to each other of command structures under the respective plans. Since the invasion plan, if implemented, would be preceded by the air-strike plan

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS et al., 2017163 Oct 62, SECRET.

²DA ODCS OPS Army War Room Journal (Cuban Crisis), TOP SECRET; CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (C), 29 Apr 63, TOP SECRET

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(although it was by no means inevitable that invasion follow the air strikes), there would be a period of overlap while assault operations were in the process of being mounted.

CINCLANT ruled that, should invasion have been decided upon, during the transition from the air-strike plan to the invasion plan the command and control arrangements provided for in the 314-316 plan would become effective 24 hours prior to D-day of the invasion assault. When the seven-day reaction time was finally set for the 316 plan (see section below dealing with reaction times), this meant that CINCLANT would declare the 316 command arrangements in effect six days after the beginning of the execution of OPLAN 312 air strikes.]

736. Thus CINCLANT set the stage for considerable tightening and consolidation of the planned command arrangements in the event Cuban contingency operations were executed. Occupying the apex of the projected tactical command structure would be CINCLANT, with immediate control over the conduct of all stages of those operations.

737. By this time (20 October), however, contingency preparations were beginning to pass beyond mere planning and were entering into a proto-operational phase. Although contingency planning went on at an increasingly intensive pace, the continuing need for attaining maximum readiness posture to execute the plans if ordered resulted in the forces associated with contingency plans being operationally affected. Soon the alerting and movement of units, prepositioning of equipment and supplies, and forward deployment of strike forces to advance staging areas or to actual bases of tactical employment would amount to partial

CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (U),
29 Apr 63, TOP SECRET.

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Implementation of contingency plans. In fact, the scope and complexity of operational activity reached such a point by 21 October that activation of a Joint Battle Staff (JBS) in JCS was warranted, and, although not officially established until 22 October, it began functioning that same day.

738. At this juncture and in the light of the course that developments were already taking, the JCS decided to accede to the dictates of the situation by vesting in CINCLANT actual operational control over forces included under Cuban contingency plans, in addition to control over contingency planning for future employment of those forces. Late on 21 October the JCS directed CINCSTRIKE to transfer to the temporary operational control of CINCLANT all Air Force and Army forces under CINCSTRIKE's control that were assigned to CINCLANT OPLANS 312-62, 314-61, and 316-61 ¹ Whereupon CINCLANT, in turn, directed his component commanders, CINCAFLANT and CINCARLANT, to assume temporary operational control, respectively, of JINCSTRIKE's Air Force and Army forces earmarked for Cuban contingency plans ²

739. CINCLANT thereby gained the full operational status and command capacity of a Unified Commander for both planning and control of forces, whereas CINCSTRIKE had been excluded from any direct role in the command and control system occurring upon present or planned U.S. actions addressed to Cuba. This was to remain CINCLANT's basic external command context for planned contingency operations for the duration of the crisis.

¹Msg, JCS 6346 to CINCSTRIKE (Info CINCLANT, CINCAFLANT (C2A-AC), CINCARLANT (C7CONARC), et al.), 220722Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to CINCAFLANT and CINCARLANT (Info JCS, CINCSTRIKE et al.), 221648Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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740. [A somewhat analogous episode touching upon CINCLANT-CINCSTRIKE command roles, one triggered by the Cuban crisis but only marginally related, occurred a few days later. On 28 October the JCS, reacting to signs of possible resurgence of the dormant Congo situation, proposed to CINCLANT that, as a precautionary move, responsibility for Africa south of the Sahara, an area encompassed within the geographical boundaries allocated to LANTCOM, be temporarily transferred to CINCSTRIKE to relieve CINCLANT while under the pressure of Cuban requirements.¹ CINCLANT's reply the next day was "strongly disagree with proposal..." Admitting that he was using the members of JTF-4 (CINCLANT's Africa planners) to augment his Cuban staff, he requested additional personnel to replace them in order that he might then reconstitute the original JTF-4 with the same experienced officers.² No decision was immediately forthcoming and eventually the issue itself was overtaken by events, but CINCLANT did retain intact his collateral African command responsibilities despite the demands of the Cuban crisis.]

741. No sooner were these institutional changes bearing upon CINCLANT's external command relationships completed than CINCLANT put into effect the internal changes in planned tactical command for invasion operations in accordance with his announcement of 20 October. [It will be recalled that CINCLANT had already effectively made provisions for himself to exercise operational control of OPLAN 312 forces, primarily through his Air Force component commander, CINCPACFLT. Over the next two days, consistent with the pattern for the air-strike plan, a similar centralization of tactical control over invasion operations was applied to OPLANS 314-316.]

¹Msg, JCS 7067 to CINCLANT, 281625Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 291918Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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742. On the evening of 22 October, CINCLANT, in his new capacity as a full-fledged Unified Commander, formally promulgated the new command structure for invasion operations that had been outlined two days earlier. He disestablished CJTF-122 and himself assumed the functions of joint commander, stipulating that except for dissolution of the subordinate JTF command the substantive provisions of current CJTF-122 contingency plans were otherwise to remain in effect. Paralleling his role for the implementation of OPLAN 312, he specified that he would exercise operational control over all forces involved in OPLANS 314-316 (through his Service component commanders (CINCAFLANT, CINCLANTFLT, CINCARLANT), plus COMJWTFM and the existing LANTCOM subordinate commander COMANTDEFCON. This categorical provision, however, was not without an element of ambiguity, as will be seen shortly. Although the intermediary joint command echelon represented by CJTF-122 had been eliminated, the standing provisions for a subordinate joint command subsequent to the initial assault were retained, with CJTF-Cuba to be established and forces assigned when directed by CINCLANT. But here the previous amendment regarding CJTF-Cuba contained in CINCLANT's message of 20 October naming CINCARLANT/CG COMARC to be CJTF-Cuba (vice CG XVIII Airborne Corps) was again modified, changing back to the original arrangements. Instead of CINCARLANT, CG XVIII Airborne Corps was redesignated to be CJTF-Cuba, to exercise operational control over all land forces (Army and Marine) during the post-assault phase of ground operations until the invasion mission was accomplished. CG XVIII Airborne Corps as CJTF-Cuba would report directly to CINCLANT -- not through CINCARLANT.¹

743. The last point regarding who was to be CJTF-Cuba and under whom he would operate in that capacity apparently raised

¹Msg, CINCLANT to CINCARLANT, CINCAFLANT, CINCLANTFLT, COMANTDEFCON, COMJWTFM, and CINCSSTRIKE (info JCS et al.), 222322Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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some query, for in less than two hours CINCLANT, in another message addressed directly to JCS and pertaining to this subject exclusively, reiterated these provisions regarding CJTF-Cuba: CG XVIII Airborne Corps would be CJTF-Cuba in lieu of CINCARLANT and would operate directly under CINCLANT.¹ From all indications CINCLANT was not overruled and his planned command arrangements for CJTF-Cuba were retained.

744. Sometime shortly thereafter CINCLANT further amended command arrangements with significant effect on the role of CINCARLANT/CG CONARC. During implementation of 314-316 the forces involved were still to be organized into three task forces according to Service. For the assault phase of implementation, the commanders of the Navy Task Force and Air Force Task Force were placed under CINCLANTFLT and CINCAFLANT, respectively; the commander of the Army Task Force, however, was placed directly under CINCLANT, rather than under CINCARLANT. For the postassault phase, the three Service Task Forces were placed under CJTF-Cuba (CG XVIII Airborne Corps), who, as indicated earlier, would be directly under CINCLANT.

745 It will be noted that CINCARLANT/CG CONARC, although allocated a role in CINCLANT's contingency planning, had been excluded from the operational command structure for implementing of plans, both during the assault and postassault phases. Instead, CG XVIII Airborne Corps occupied the ranking Army position under CINCLANT. In this sense the status of CINCARLANT/CG CONARC was an anomaly, inasmuch as his other Service component counterparts, CINCAFLANT/COMTAC and CINCLANTFLT, did have a command role assigned for operations, both under OPLAN 312 and the assault phase of 314-316.

¹Msg CINCLANT to JCS, 230040Z Oct 62, SECRET

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746. The next day, 23 October, CINCLANT requested JCS authorization to activate JUWTF as provided for in Annex Y to OPLANS 314-316.¹ A day later, as soon as the request was approved by JCS,² JUWTF was established under CINCLANT, with an Army major general appointed to be its commander.³

747. Thus by 24 October CINCLANT had firmly centralized in himself, as a Unified Commander directly under JCS, control over contingency planning, control over the actual forces preparing to implement those plans, and control over tactical operations when plans would be executed. The diagrams presented in Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 show how the basic command structure was now organized. It so remained, except for minor modifications, thereafter. Functionally, however, there was considerable deviation from the formal scheme of command relationships in the hectic proto-operational activities attending Service preparations to carry out Service tasks organic to the CINCLANT mission. Moreover, this centralization of control itself created serious staffing problems for CINCLANT.

E. LANTCOM HEADQUARTERS STAFF ORGANIZATION

748. As early as 18 October difficulties had begun to be encountered within LANTCOM headquarters in giving practical form to the means and methods for exercising this consolidation of authority. In specific terms of organization and procedures, concrete staff arrangements were lacking to support adequately the greatly expanded command responsibilities. Simultaneously with the reorganizing of command relations, therefore, equally important changes in staff composition and structure were occurring.

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 232038Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 6943, to CINCLANT, 241753Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to JCS et al., 242246Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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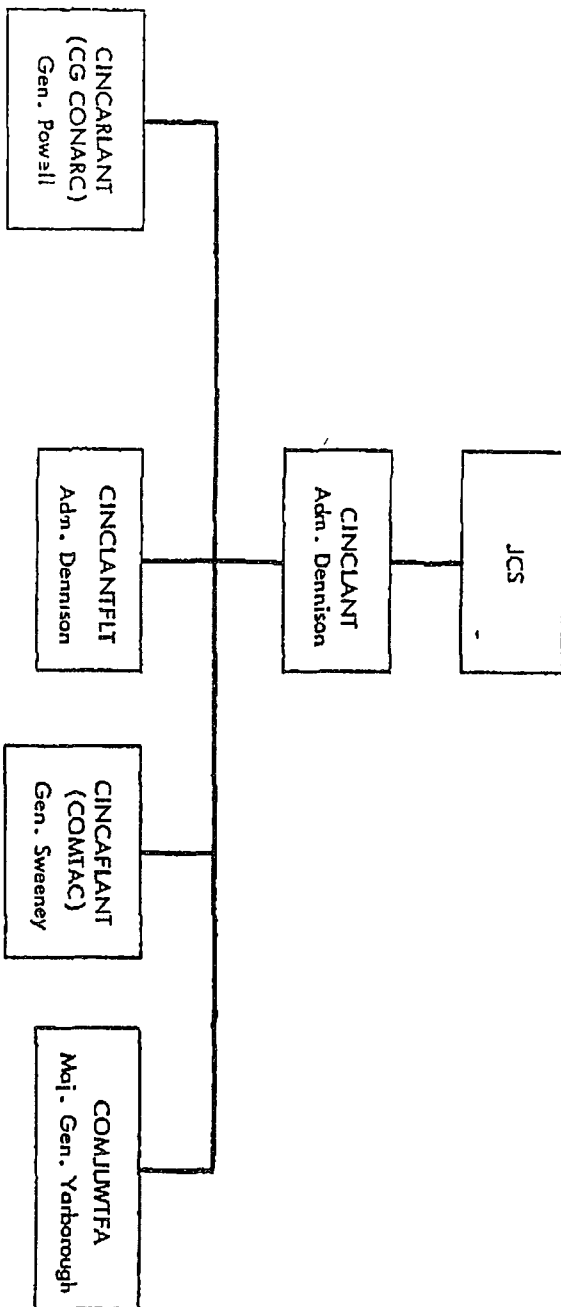


FIGURE 4 Command Relations during Planning for CINCLANT OPLANS 312/314/316

DRAFT 3

FIGURE 5
ENCLOSURE A

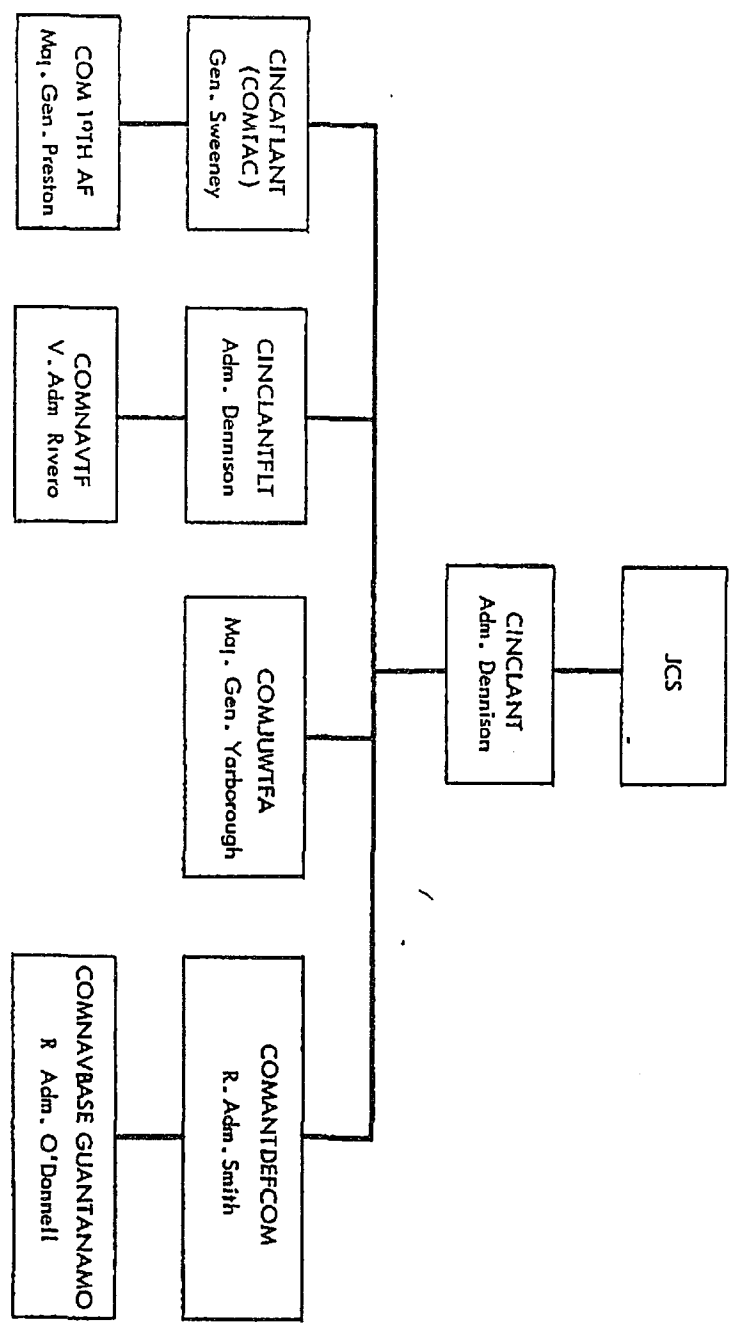


FIGURE 5. Command Relations during Implementation of CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62

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FIGURE 6
ENCLOSURE A

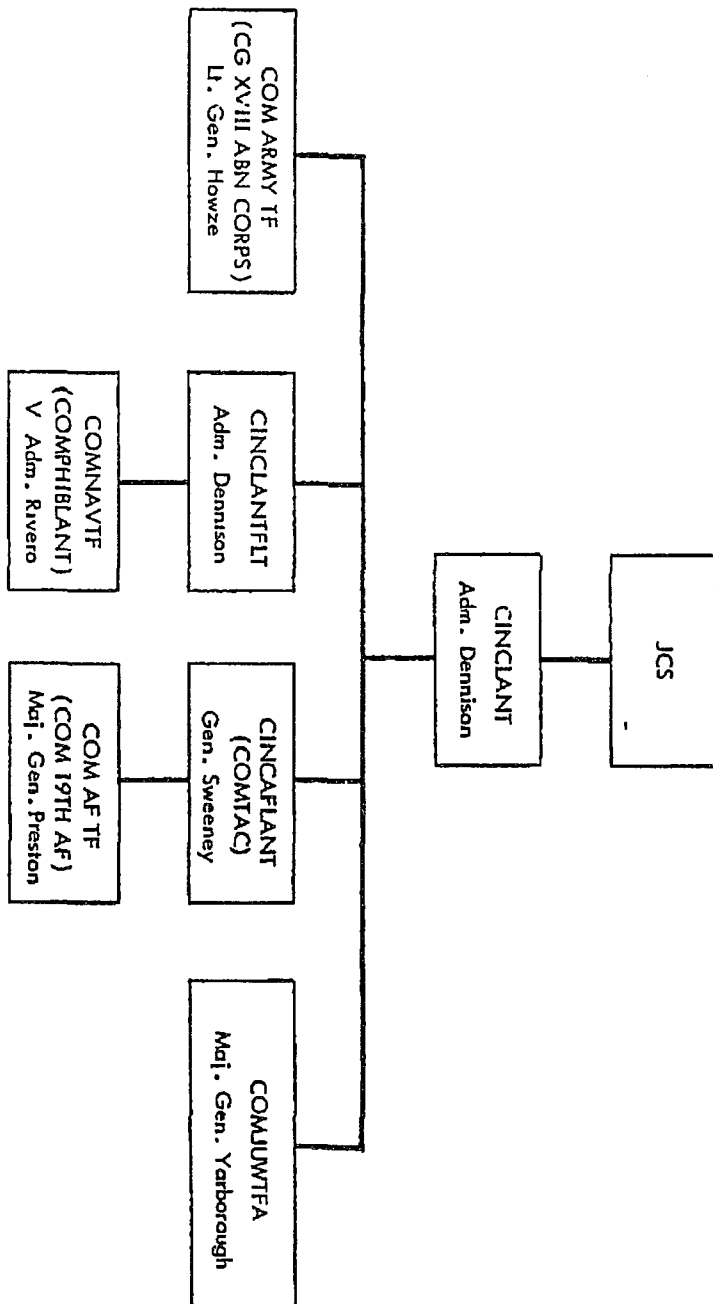


FIGURE 6 Command Relations during Implementation of the Assault Phase
of OPLAN 314/316

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FIGURE 7
ENCLOSURE A

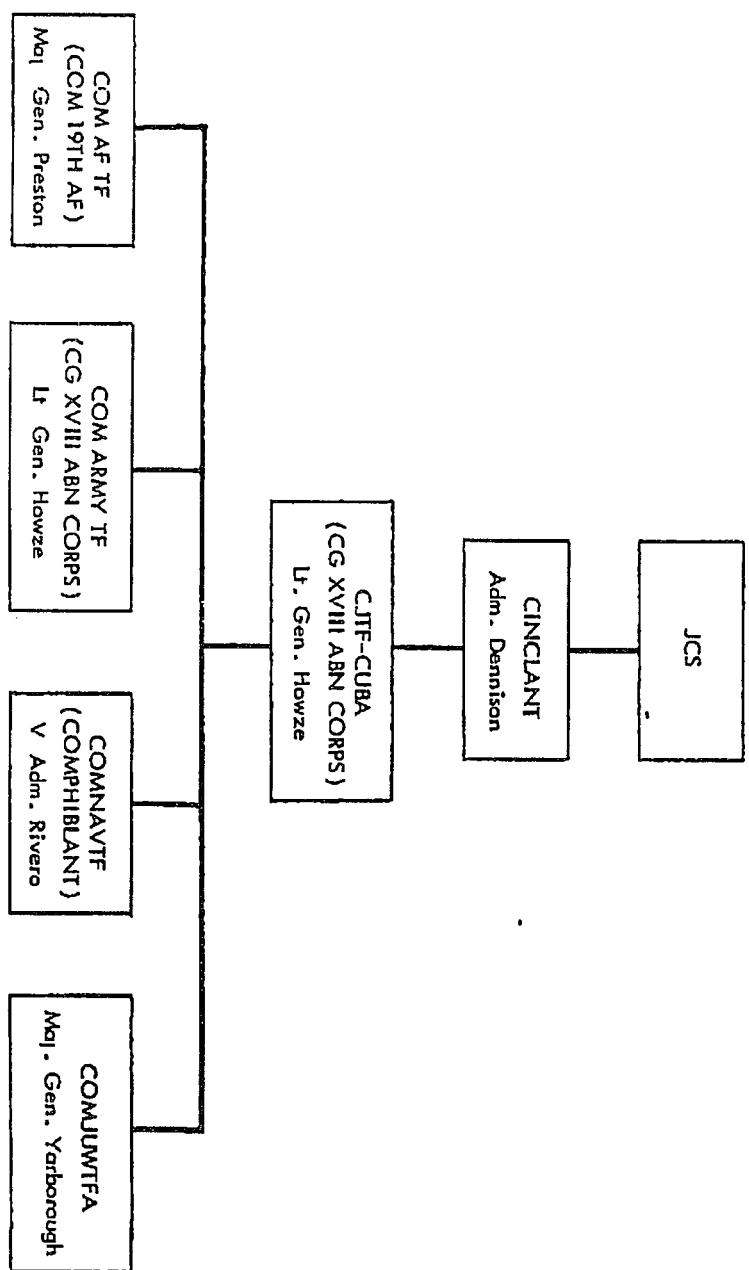


FIGURE 7 Command Relations during Implementation of the Postassault Phase
of OPLAN 314/316

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749. Normally only a small, token representation of Army and Air Force officers are on duty with the LANTCOM staff. It consists predominantly of Navy officers, and the same staff serves both LANTCOM and LANTFLT headquarters more or less interchangeably; organizationally and functionally the two staff capacities are indistinguishable. By 18 October the press of burgeoning Cuban activity made it apparent that the LANTCOM staff would have to be augmented. At the same time CINCLANT desired to keep separate these specifically Cuban contingency matters from his general war mission, expressly by maintaining a clear staff distinction between them. An immediate ready source of such augmentation for contingency staffing, and one that would not be at the expense of general war staffing, was conveniently at hand in the form of CINCLANT's Joint Task Force-4 (JTF-4), [a special planning headquarters for operations in Africa south of the Sahara, a region also included within the geographical boundaries of the LANTCOM area.] On 19 October, therefore, CINCLANT relieved the Army lieutenant general who was the incumbent CJTF-4 and requested CGUSCONARC to assign him as LANTCOM Deputy Chief of Staff for Cuban planning and operations. He was so assigned the next day, 20 October.¹

750 Meanwhile CINCLANT decided to go further in codifying along more institutional lines the desired distinction between contingency staffing and general war staffing. The following day, 21 October, he created a wholly separate staff exclusively concerned with Cuban matters, and named the former CJTF-4 to

¹This description of LANTCOM headquarters is based on information contained in "CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis-1962 (U)," 29 Apr 63, TOP SECRET, as amplified through interviews with J-3 staff officers familiar with CINCLANT organization and operations during the crisis.

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head it as CINCLANT Chief of Staff for Cuban contingency operations. To man the new Contingency Staff, personnel were drawn largely from the JTF-4 staff, others obtained by absorbing the nucleus staff of the dissolved JTF-122, and some borrowed from the regular CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT staff. Later, additional personnel were made available by CINCSTRIKE, CCUSCONARC, COMFAC, and by the Service Departments. At its peak this CINCLANT Cuban Contingency Staff numbered 113 officers and 69 enlisted men.

751. Since the regular CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT staff was retained, establishment of the ad hoc Contingency Staff resulted in two independent CINCLANT staffs at the same time on the same echelon. The Cuban staff was responsible for everything related to [OPLANS 312-314-316]; the regular staff was charged with all other CINCLANT responsibilities not directly connected with Cuban crisis operations. Of the latter, the on-going general war mission of the command was ~~now~~ especially acute in view of the imminent danger that the contingency might escalate. Accordingly, two War Rooms were maintained in CINCLANT headquarters, one for each staff.

752. A Contingency Battle Staff was activated for the War Room of the Contingency Staff, becoming operational at 0800 hours, 22 October. Charged with staffing all LANTCOM Unified Command actions relating to [OPLANS 312-314-316], its role, as originally conceived, was twofold: to be a primary action agency, and to perform the more conventional battle staff support services of monitoring and information processing. It was organized on a three-section basis, with 20 officers per section, in order to operate around the clock. A formal

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battle staff as such was not activated for the War Room of the regular CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT staff, but augmented watches were kept on duty there in order also to provide 24-hour coverage. Very quickly, however, the concept of two separate CINCLANT staffs, each with its respective War Room and Battle Staff or watch, was abandoned de facto. Logical enough in the abstract, the arrangement proved not to work out well in practice; operationally, the theoretical distinction between Cuban contingency matters and general war matters was not as clear-cut as had been assumed. Instead, the staff functions relating to the two areas of activity impinged upon each other substantively and were inextricably intertwined procedurally. After an initial period marked by considerable confusion, an informal modus operandi soon emerged. The regular CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT staff assumed action responsibility for contingency matters, while the Contingency Staff, to all effects and purposes, gradually merged with the regular staff. As a result, the Contingency Battle Staff lost its "action" role, reverting to the monitoring/information-support role of a conventional battle staff.

753. Paralleling the security policy in the Joint Staff of JCS, information pertaining to the Cuban crisis was extremely closely held at LANTCOM headquarters. Sensitive intelligence and reconnaissance data, or information referring to decisions regarding U.S. courses of action, were disclosed to very few individuals on either of the two CINCLANT staffs, and only on an austere need-to-know basis. Crucial items of such nature were frequently conveyed exclusively on direct line or command between principals, e.g., Chairman, JCS (or Director Joint Staff) and CINCLANT personally, without staff members being

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privity to what transpired. This situation of restricted information flow was especially acute in the first week of the crisis. Presumably, from a working staff point of view the effect was to compound further the difficulty of providing staffing support for CINCLANT actions.

754. During its existence the Contingency Battle Staff had relatively little interaction with the JCS Cuban Joint Battle Staff. When Joint Battle Staff members had occasion to contact LANTCOM headquarters, they usually dealt with the regular CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT staff. Similarly, members of the JCS Joint Staff, and particularly J-3 action officers, communicated directly with their counterparts on the regular CINCLANT staff. As in the case of the JCS Joint Battle Staff, the CINCLANT Contingency Battle Staff had no role in the development of contingency plans. The planning function was performed by a special group apart from the CINCLANT Contingency Staff and the regular CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT Staff.

755. Through the month of November, as the intensity of crisis events subsided -- and in view of its already greatly circumscribed mission -- CINCLANT's Contingency Battle Staff was progressively reduced in size until finally disestablished on 3 December. Shortly thereafter the entire CINCLANT Cuban Contingency Staff itself, which for some time had existed only pro forma, was officially dissolved and the LANTCOM headquarters organization returned to its normal precrisis configuration.

F. REFRACTING THE AIR-STRIKE PLAN INTO DISCRETE OPTIONS

756. While the centralized command structure was in the process of crystallizing, there began a series of specialized refinements of the air-strike plan, each constituting in its

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own right a specific subplan embraced by the overall 312 plan. Together they represented the range of predetermined alternatives, in terms of incremental options, that could be selectively implemented for a controlled, discriminate application of force as desired. Besides being systematically arranged in ascending order of magnitude, their individual parameters were further codified according to types of targets and reaction-time criteria. Ultimately there were six of these special subplans of CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62. All of them came into being as a result of Presidential command and control requirements.

757 The first of these special subplans of OPLAN 312 to be developed was a selective retaliatory air-strike plan. Its purpose was to provide for a limited reaction in order to achieve a limited objective, namely, in the event a U.S. reconnaissance aircraft was shot down, to discourage any repetition of such acts. With stepped-up aerial reconnaissance (both high altitude and low-altitude) now being openly conducted over Cuba, a delicate problem had arisen. For the U.S., reconnaissance was crucial, it was the key to future national decisions in the crisis, and the President was therefore determined that it be allowed to continue without obstruction. Serious concern was felt, however, lest mounting Cuban objections to these overflights hitherto confined to outraged protests, go beyond threats to impulsive acts against U.S. aircraft involved. [Presence of the sophisticated SA-2 weapon system provided the Cubans with the wherewithal and here is where sensitive policy considerations entered into what was otherwise a tactical issue, for the SAM sites where manned, at least in part, by Soviet personnel. Nevertheless, it was apparently decided that since the purpose was]

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[demonstration of intent as much as punitive reprisal, retaliatory action of the appropriate degree of emphasis under the circumstances should be addressed to the SAM sites.]

758. [Some time on the 22nd or shortly thereafter a general requirement was accordingly placed on CINCLANT to be prepared to take appropriate retaliatory measures against SAM sites in the event that U.S. reconnaissance aircraft were destroyed. How or when this directive was conveyed is not known, but explicit terms of reference seem not to have been provided at the time. On the contrary, the detailed substance of what had actually been planned was provided to JCS and the White House considerably after the fact, almost as an afterthought.]

759. [The earliest record of the retaliatory air-strike plan was 23 October. On that date CINCLANT promulgated in message form a special operation plan, nicknamed "FIRE ROSE", for the selective air destruction of one or more SAM sites in response to Cuban forces shooting down U.S. reconnaissance aircraft. The plan provided for a separate task force over and above those forces already committed to the regular OPIAN 312 air strike; it specified that 16 additional F-100 aircraft would be maintained on alert readiness status so as to be airborne no later than 30 minutes after the order to execute FIRE ROSE. Included were technical operational instructions regarding the armament to be employed and how the attack was to be carried out. As to targeting, three SAM sites were named, one (or more) of which would be selected at the time of execution.]

[Msg, CINCLANT to 1st AD and 479 TFW ADVON, 231702Z Oct 62,]
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760. CINCLANT had received an information copy of the original message promulgating FIRE HOSE, which was then repeated by CINCLANT to CINCSAC, and others, at 2202 (local time) on 24 October. Not until the evening of 27 October did CINCLANT repeat it to JCS. A few hours later, at 0143 on 28 October, the NMCC in turn repeated it to the White House. In the interim, at approximately 2204 on 27 October, CINCLANT himself had forwarded the details of the special FIRE HOSE plan in two other messages addressed directly to JCS.¹

761. [It was on 27 October that a U-2 aircraft was actually lost over Cuba and low-level reconnaissance flights encountered ground fire.² The fate of the missing plane, however, was not known immediately, and by the time the fact that it had indeed been shot down was established, too long an interval had elapsed for U.S. reaction to appear unequivocally as retaliation in response to the specific Cuban act. Besides, other circumstances militating against any such use of force had interjected themselves in the meanwhile. As a result, planned retaliatory measures were not implemented at the time.]

762. [Despite the promulgation of FIRE HOSE, the issue of what the U.S. reaction should be if a reconnaissance aircraft were destroyed by Cuban forces preoccupied the President, the Executive Committee of the NSC, the Secretary of Defense, and the JCS for the next month.]

763. [Shortly after the appearance of FIRE HOSE, a finer distinction was made in the degree of retaliatory action to]

¹Msgs, CINCLANT to JCS, 2515Z and 280154Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²USAF Hq Historical Division Liaison Office, "Headquarters USAF Chronology of the Cuban Crisis for the Period 27 Oct - 2 Nov 62," TOP SECRET.

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[be taken. [FIRE HOSE became restricted to a reprisal air strike on a single SA-2 site, with the reaction time specified as two hours, while a new option was developed by CINCPACFLT on 25 October to provide for air strikes against all SAM sites.¹ This latter subplan of 312, also calling for a two-hour reaction time, later came to be identified by the nickname FULL HOUSE.²]

764. [A third subplan was added on 28 October. CINCPACFLT, in issuing another formal change to OPLAN 312-62, divided the air-strike plan into three different categories of action in ascending order of magnitude. Category I included FIRE HOSE and FULL HOUSE, providing for selective destruction of from one to all SAM sites, and called for a readiness posture based on two-hour reaction time. Category II was a new subplan nicknamed SHOE BLACK, which applied to a wider range of targets, but still selectively; SHOE BLACK provided for air strikes against a single target or multiple targets grouped by type (SAM sites, airfields, missile complexes, and combat air patrols), with a readiness posture based on from two-hour to six-hour reaction time depending on scale of operations directed. Category III, identified as SCALBARDS, was the execution of the full OPLAN 312, with a readiness posture based on a reaction time to commence air strikes in less than 12 hours after the execution order; later the code word designation RED BLUFF was applied to the total 312 plan. CINCPACFLT was named to be target coordinator for all forces involved in air-strike operations under each of the three categories.]

¹JCS 2304/33, 25 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPACFLT et al. (Info JCS), 050906Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCPACFLT to JCS et al., 281640Z, Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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765. [The reaction time specified by CINCLANT for SHOE BLACK occasioned a demurer from JCS a week later. Discussion of this problem is deferred to a following section dealing generally with planned reaction times.]

766. [The existence of retaliation plans expressly oriented to such an eventuality notwithstanding, when the U-2 reconnaissance plane was shot down over Cuba on 27 October none of the plans were ordered executed. For one thing, the facts surrounding the incident were not known for some time; for another, on the heels of the incident new political considerations connected with the Soviet agreement to dismantle the missile bases, followed by the U.S. decision to suspend aerial reconnaissance and lift the quarantine during U.N. Secretary General U Thant's mission to Cuba, largely precluded any military action being initiated then. Nevertheless, when reconnaissance was resumed the same questions regarding retaliation still confronted U.S. decision makers, perhaps now as an even more complex policy issue.]

767. [On 6 November, at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, the President requested comments on what course of action should be taken in the event that U.S. reconnaissance aircraft were either fired upon or shot down over Cuba. The two eventualities being projected were no longer hypothetical, they were identical with what had already happened when the U-2 plane was shot down and to other U.S. aircraft were fired upon. The JCS, charged with generating the military views on the policy issues involved, immediately took the problem under formal consideration. In the process they produced a JCS "Green" on the problem that culminated the next day in a memorandum from the Chairman, JCS, to the Secretary of Defense.]

JCS 2304/96, 6 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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768. [In response to the President's request the JCS, in a memorandum on 7 November to the Secretary of Defense, recommended that:

a. If the incident were judged to be an isolated one, the U.S. should take limited retaliatory action against the specific offending Cuban facility (weapons, weapons site, or airfield) responsible for the attack.

b. If the incident were judged to be evidence of deliberate intent on the part of Cuban authorities to resist surveillance, the U.S. reaction should be full-scale air strikes on all airfields and air-defense weapons systems in Cuba, with consideration also given to including IL-28's and the instituting of a complete blockade of Cuba.

The JCS summed up their position on the matter with emphasis, stating "There is no question in our minds . . . that if the Cuban authorities demonstrate an intention to resist our over-flights we must react promptly against the entire air defense system."]

769. The introduction by the JCS of the somewhat irrelevant issue of the IL-28's (considering the restricted context of the specific problem being addressed) reflected the serious military concern with this remaining Cuban offensive capability, since the strategic missile threat by now had been removed. It proved to be the motivation for developing yet another subplan under OPLAN 312. Next morning (8 November), following the memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman, JCS, directed CINCLANT, via KY-9 secure telephone, to prepare a concept of operations for destruction of the IL-28 aircraft in Cuba by selective and discriminate air attack. CINCLANT,]

[Memo, CJCS to SecDef, JCSM-872-62, "Recommended U S Reaction to Hostile Attack on U S. Reconnaissance Aircraft over Cuba," 7 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.]

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[responding that same afternoon, submitted an outline plan, designating the operation by the code name HOT PLATE.¹

770. At the same time CINCLANT had, in turn, instructed CINCPACFLT to prepare an appropriate detailed operation plan for carrying out HOT PLATE. A day later, on 9 November, CINCPACFLT completed a special plan, identified as Operation HOT PLATE, as a subplan under OPLAN 312 and utilizing the forces assigned therein. It provided for destruction by air strikes of all IL-28's on Cuban airfields and at assembly bases; AFLANT forces were to attack those in the area of San Julian and Naval air of TF-135, those at Holguin. Spelled out in detail were task responsibilities, command relations, forces, missions, objectives, rules of engagement, and execution instructions.²

771 Upon it being informally concurred in by the Joint Staff of JCS and coordinated with other interested agencies, CINCLANT formally promulgated the special plan for Operation HOT PLATE on 10 November.³

772. Finally, at the end of the month the last of the subplans covering selective options under OPLAN 312 appeared. It too reflected the strong position taken by JCS regarding possible Cuban interference with reconnaissance, which had been expressed on 7 November in response to the President's request for comments. The JCS accordingly laid on a planning requirement for CINCLANT. On 29 November CINCLANT directed CINCPACFLT to prepare a special operation plan, to be identified]

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS (to DJS for CJCS), 081956Z, Nov 62.
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²Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCLANT, JCS, CSAF, et al., 092157Z Nov 62,
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³Msg, CINCLANT to JCS et al., 102342Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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[as ROYAL FLUSH, for air strikes against all Cuban air defenses. .
This operation was to amount to the first two waves of the first strike of OPLAN 312. The next day, 30 November, CINCPACFLT promulgated special subplan ROYAL FLUSH, as Interim Change No. 37 to CINCPACFLT OPLAN 312-62, to provide for the required selective option under CINCPACFLT OPLAN 312. The planned ROYAL FLUSH operation would consist of simultaneous air strikes against primary elements of the Cuban air defense system (radar, SA-2 sites, antiaircraft, airfields, and combat fighter aircraft in the air), and would comprise the first two waves of the first strike under the full OPLAN 312.¹

773. The gamut of separate options of OPLAN 312 thus ultimately numbered six, each codified into its own respective subplan.

In generally ascending order of magnitude, these ran as follows:

- a. FIRE HOSE - single SAM site.
- b. FULL HOUSE - all SAM sites.
- c. SHOE BLACK - selected target complexes.
- d. HOT PLATE - all IL-28 aircraft and assembly bases.
- e. ROYAL FLUSH - all air defense capability.
- f. RED BLUFF - total OPLAN 312 air strikes

774. A somewhat related special plan, though not actually a subplan of OPLAN 312, was also developed. This plan was an outgrowth of the failure to learn promptly what had happened when the U-2 plane was shot down on 27 October. Following the incident, CINCPACFLT, at the behest of the JCS, had instructed CINCPACFLT to prepare a plan for systematic air search operations, accompanied by armed escorting aircraft, in the event a reconnaissance plane were missing. The required plan,]

¹Msg, CINCPACFLT to CINCPACFLT et al., 302358Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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[nicknamed GREY WOLF, was produced as CINCLANT OF ORDER No 186-62. GREY WOLF was approved by CINCLANT on 8 November.¹

775. The proliferation of 312 subplans, well before the list was even complete, posed problems of coordination between the air-strike plan and functionally related air-defense plans for CONUS. There was no longer a crisply defined point to distinguish exactly when OPLAN 312 was being implemented. Yet, the implementation of CINCONAD's OPLAN 1-62 for air defense of southeast U.S. was based on a binary go-no-go option geared to implementation of the 312 air-strike plan, on the logical assumption that U.S. air attack on Cuba could be expected to provoke Cuban attacks on the U.S. then if ever at all. On 5 November CINCONAD therefore requested JCS authorization to implement his OPLAN 1-62 upon implementation of any of the lesser options of CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, as well as the full plan. The JCS at their meeting of 6 November agreed to CINCONAD's request³ and so authorized him the same day.⁴]

776. A similar problem of coordination between the 312 plan and other plans had occurred earlier and had been handled in an unusual way. About the 18th or 19th of October it was recognized that there was a strong likelihood that execution of the air-strike plan would provoke a major Cuban attack on the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo. On the one hand, the CNO, acting as JCS reserve commander, was responsible for defense of Guantanamo (as well as for conduct of the quarantine), but on the other, he was outside the direct command line for contingency plans, except in his capacity as one member of the corporate body JCS. Yet the operations covered

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS (Info CINCLANT) 082116Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 052340Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³JCS 2304/94, 6 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msg, JCS 7256 to CINCONAD, 6 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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by the two plans were functionally related insofar as one could be expected to initiate the other. Since the contingency operation would be determining -- and was the more important -- the plan for defense of Guantanamo was therefore incorporated as a subordinate part of the air-strike plan. On 20 October CINCLANT issued Change No. 2 to OPLAN 312-62, promulgating Annex "L" to the basic OPLAN, which in general terms provided for a Guantanamo defense plan tied in with the contingency air-strike plan.¹ It is not known on what authority CINCLANT had taken such action, but presumably the particular Guantanamo defense plan contained in Annex "L" would be applicable only incidental to, and in the event of, prior decision to implement the 312 plan. Otherwise, in the absence of the air-strike plan being executed, the existing provisions of the earlier independent plan for Guantanamo defense would obtain.

777. Other, more routine, modifications in OPLAN 312 were also made throughout the course of the crisis. Some of these were normal technical revisions in operational details of targeting, sortie schedules, and task assignments, either flowing from the subplan requirements described above or to up-date plans to reflect the most current intelligence derived from photo reconnaissance, many of the 40-odd numbered interim changes to CINCLANT OPLAN 312 were of such nature. Some of the modifications, however, were more substantial. [Interim Change No 4 of 23 October, for example, provided for an immediate restrike operational cycle, specifying force configuration and employment,² Similarly, because of continuing work on missile sites in Cuba, Interim Change No. 10 of 28 October provided, at the behest of the JCS,³ for the addition of a fourth wave to the]

¹CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (U), 29 Apr 63, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT/COMTAC to AFLANT ADVON, et al., 230837Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT SITREP to JCS, CNO, et al, 270228Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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[first air strike on MRBM/IRBM complexes. It specified the forces, armaments, targets, schedules, and entry points of attack for this fourth wave.]

778. Besides modifications as such, there was also the need to complete missing portions of OPLAN 312. It will be recalled that the air-strike plan had not been completed before the crisis and that approval of the basic plan by JCS had been rushed through on 19 October only because of pressing urgency. Lacking was the Annex providing for an unconventional warfare (UW) plan; apparently the need for UW operations ancillary to air-strike operations was belatedly recognized. On 30 October COMJWTFM prepared an outline plan for conduct of UW operations in support of OPLAN 312.² Based on COMJWTFM's outline, CINCLANT, approximately eleven hours later, promulgated Annex "Y" to CINCLANT OPLAN [312-62 (Unconventional Warfare)]. It was a special adaptation of the existing UW plan provided for in Annex "Y" to the as yet not approved OPLAN 316-61, which in turn had been derived from OPLAN [REDACTED]

The plan in its present form, however, was not truly substantive in the sense of spelling out what the operations would actually be and how they would be carried out.

779. Only late in the evening of the following day (1 November), after assigning tasks and responsibilities for component forces

¹Msg, CINCLANT to CTF 135, COMFAIRJAX et al, (info JCS), 281011Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, COMJWTFM to CINCLANT, COMARJWTFM et al., (Info JCS et al.), 301230Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, COMJWTFM, and CINCLANT, 302338Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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of JMWTF in detail,¹ did COMJMWTF provide the JCS, CINCLANT, and others with the concept of operations on which UW planning was being based in support of OPLAN 312-62.² As a result, it was not until 5 November that the UW plan contained in Annex "Y" to CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62 was approved by the JCS. At that, approval was granted except for those parts that inter-related with OPLAN 316, which were thereby deleted.³ Later, after the middle of November, a wholly new cycle of UW planning was initiated. This will be discussed in connection with OPLAN 316, to which it was more closely related.

780. [Plans for psychological operations in support of OPLAN 312 also received attention. Quite early in the crisis a psychological warfare operation plan, nicknamed BUGLE CALL, had been developed and stocks of leaflets forewarning the Cuban populace that military action was imminent were printed in readiness. Tactical commanders, however, objected that such warning leaflets would preclude the advantage of surprise. Accordingly, on 1 November, BUGLE CALL was cancelled in favor of another plan and the existing stocks of leaflets already printed were ordered destroyed. The new plan, nicknamed AUTUMN LEAVES, provided guidance and directives for preparing and disseminating leaflets by airdrop at the time OPLAN 312 was implemented, in order to inform the population why the U.S. was attacking Cuban military installations. CINCLANT would be responsible for leaflet production and processing, while CINCPAC-LANT would be responsible for delivery. The leaflet text, as]

¹Msg, COMJMWTF to CINCLANT et al., (Info JCS et al.) 010522Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, COMJMWTF to JCS, CINCLANT, et al., 020046Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msg, JCS 7242 to CINCLANT, COMJMWTF, 26 31, 050007Z, Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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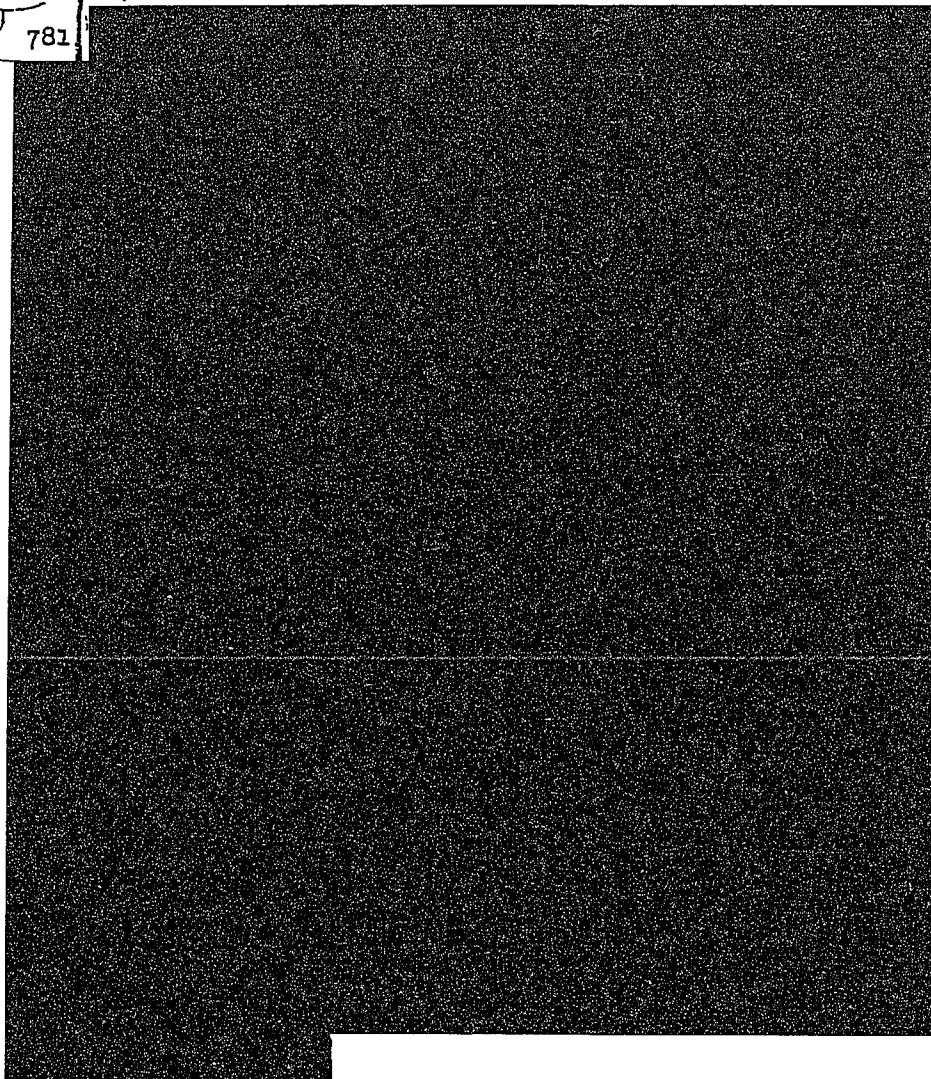
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[approved by the JCS, was provided. In addition, targets were designated, and instructions for carrying out the leaflet missions by high-speed tactical aircraft were appended.]

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¹Msg, CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT (Info JCS et al.), 012010Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT and CINCPACFLT (Info JCS), 201730Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³CINCLANT Historical Account of Cuban Crisis - 1962 (U), 27 Apr 63, TOP SECRET.

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C. EXPANDING AND FILLING IN INVASION PLANS

782. Concurrently with the elaboration and refinement of the 312 air-strike plan, invasion planning was also undergoing amplification and revision. If given slightly less priority, these modifications in invasion plans were perhaps of potentially more far-reaching consequence; certainly they were not as quickly adopted, and many more echelons of the total decision-making system were involved in them. Their attendant operational ramifications, moreover, had greater dislocating impact on a much larger segment of the military establishment than the alterations in the air-strike plan. }

783. Even before OPLAN 316-62 was formally approved as the invasion plan, changes and additions had begun to appear. As in the case of the air-strike plan, they proved to continue throughout the crisis. One concomitant of settling upon a single basic invasion plan had been the changes in concept and in command relations previously mentioned. At the same time new substantive provisions, or amendments expanding existing provisions, were being added. Some of these were relatively peripheral, but others impinged upon central issues determining the fundamental character of whatever operations would be carried out.

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¹Msg, CG XVIII Abn Corps to COMTAC (Info CINCLANT) 211805Z Oct 62 (repeated by CINCLANT for Info JCS, 240352Z Oct. 62), TOP SECRET.

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785. Also on 21 October considerable attention began to be given to civil affairs provisions in invasion planning. On that day the Chief of Staff, Army, acting in his capacity as Executive for JCS for civil affairs, advised the JCS that a review of the civil affairs planning contained in OPLAN 314/316 indicated "a major deficiency" in the occupation phase of operations.¹ He therefore recommended that JCS authorize him to establish a Civil Affairs Special Planning Group immediately, in order to develop a complete and detailed civil affairs plan for military occupation of Cuba.¹ The JCS agreed, and the same day, in a staff memorandum to the Army Chief of Staff, they so directed.²

786. A week later, on 30 October, CINCLANT himself revised the civil affairs annex to his OPLAN 316. CINCLANT would retain overall jurisdiction for civil affairs activities, with CINCARLANT coordinating civil affairs planning and CJTF-Cuba, when activated, exercising civil affairs authority and responsibility under CINCLANT during actual operations.³ But substantive civil affairs planning, largely because of a lack of known terms of reference, proceeded at a slow pace. Not until the middle of November did a draft JCS policy directive relative to the conduct of civil affairs administration in the postassault

¹Memo, CSA to JCS, CSAM-359-62, "Immediate Establishment of a Civil Affairs Special Planning Group (U)," 21 Oct 62, Encl to JCS 2304/72, same subject, same date, TOP SECRET.

²Memo, JCS to CSA, SN-1136-62, "Immediate Establishment of a Civil Affairs Special Planning Group (U)," 21 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to CINCARLANT, et al., DAIN 283146, 30 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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and occupation phases undergo staffing, both intra-JCS and interagency, but it never did achieve an approved final form prior to the termination of the crisis.¹ Even force requirements in support of expected civil affairs activities connected with extended military occupation were not easily established. The JCS had requested estimates of such force requirements from CINCLANT well before the crisis, on 6 October,² and on 17 October CINCLANT submitted a partial list,³ which was not approved by the JCS until 4 December,⁴ along with JCS suggestions of additional force requirements.⁵ By then, the question of military occupation of Cuba had been relegated by events into an academic issue.

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¹JCS 2304/107, 16 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 6581 to CINCLANT, 061510Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 172046Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴JCS 2018/522, 29 Nov 62 (Decision on 6 Dec 62), TOP SECRET.

⁵Msg, JCS 7728 to CINCLANT, et al., 061623Z Dec 62, TOP SECRET.

⁶CINCLANT reports cited in J-3 SITREP 8-62, JCS 7107 to DSTP Offutt AFB, et al., 300954Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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¹Msg, JCS 7066 to CINCLANT (Info CINCARLANT and CINCAFLANT),
281607Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CG USCONARC/ARLANT to CINCLANT (Info JCS, CINCAFLANT,
CINCLANTFLT), ATEOC-JR 302881, 292127Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET

³USAF Hq Historical Div Liaison Office, "Chronology of Air
Force Actions During the Cuban Crisis: 14 October - 30 November
1962," Apr 63, TOP SECRET.

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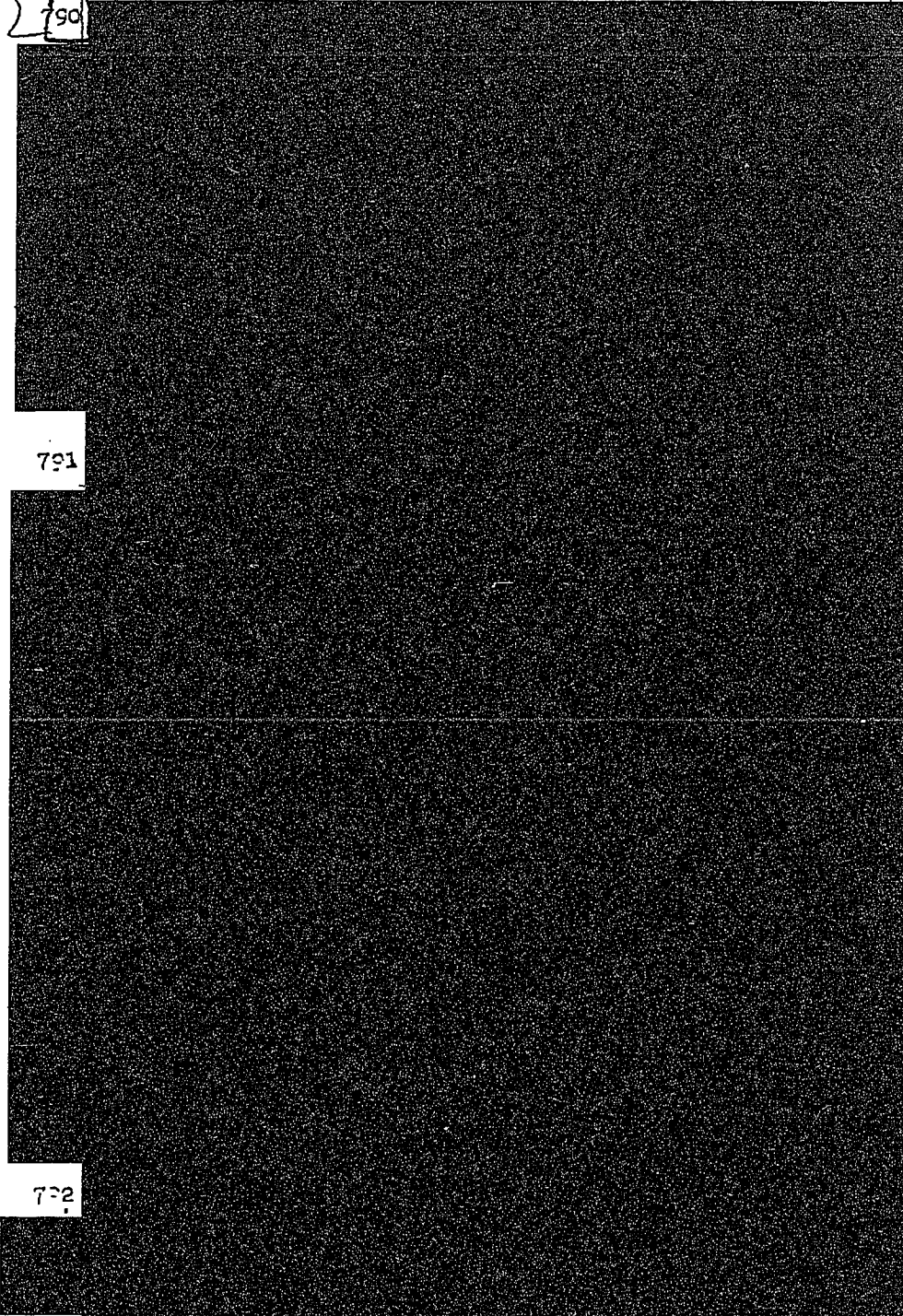
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1. Msg, JCS 7166 to CINCLANT, 012312Z Nov 62, SECRET.

2. Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 020415Z Nov 62. TOP SECRET.

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C	343	344	345	346 terminations	347	the office 348	the U.S. 349	350	that 351	352	that 353	354	355	356
D	357	undertaken 358	to be 359	the opportunity	the JCS	the final	364	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
E	1442	X	33	34	35	trans	now on to	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
F	1443	X	for Havana	4-sevante	25-8-3002	4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
G	1444	X	1 PIR mission 3994	warning	1	X	2	3	4	5	6	X		

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Memo, CJCS to President, CM-85-62, "Evaluation of the Effect on U.S. Operational Plans of Soviet Army Equipment Introduced into Cuba," 2 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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Msg, CINCLANT to JCS (Info CINCLANTFLT, CINCAFLANT, CINCARLANT),
041532Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET. Jc

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795/ Relatively late in the crisis, about the middle of November, the JCS in reviewing Annex Y (Unconventional Warfare) to OPLAN 316 (also the applicable UW Annex for 312), observed that it only provided for UW operations complementary to and in direct support of overt conventional attack by major U.S. forces. Possible opportunities for UW operations presented by contingency situations prior to or unrelated to such attack were not covered. On 16 November, the JCS therefore directed CINCLANT to develop UW plans of two types for covert support of internal uprisings in Cuba:

a. On the basis of the covertly supported uprisings being followed by overt commitment of conventional U.S. forces, as required, to exploit any success achieved,

b. On the basis of no overt commitment of conventional U.S. forces.¹

COMJUNTFEA was still in the process of developing the required new UW plans when the crisis, shortly after, began to show signs of having run its course. The prospects of operations such as those contemplated diminished accordingly.

796 Other important amendments to invasion planning provisions were also effected in regard to reaction times and force levels. These are treated separately in the next two sections.

1. MSG, JCS 7414 to CINCLANT, 151607Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET

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4. ESTABLISHING REACTION TIMES

797. Probably the greatest single source of perturbation as far as contingency military plans were concerned was reaction times. As before the crisis, the President and Secretary of Defense continued to lay on requirements demanding rigid operational adherence to austere reaction-time criteria. From a strategic point of view, the element of tactical surprise as to the nature and timing of any military action was seen as crucial. Paramount, of course, was the overriding fear of escalation, but another rationale also was evident. Discretionary selection from a range of predetermined kinds of military moves, in conjunction with quick execution of the particular course of action chosen, offered a potential technique for controlling in some measure the character of the crisis, containing it within manageable bounds, and ultimately winning maximum policy gains with minimum expenditure of military effort -- and the least risk. The national decision regarding the U.S. response to the crisis hinged on the application of military force subordinate to and directly in support of the primary political maneuvers that were being employed to resolve the military issue at the root of the crisis. Hence, placing the burden of responsiveness in meeting short reaction times on the military establishment in effect enhanced the flexibility of national political decision making. The degree to which this was carried in the case of the Cuban crisis represents an innovation.

798 [One of the first problems involving reaction times was in connection with OPLAN 312-62, the air-strike plan. It emerged as a result of unforeseen operational consequences attending preparations to implement the 312 plan. By 22 October, the heavy concentration of aircraft at Homestead and Key West posed an inviting vulnerability that gave JCS pause for concern. But the]

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[price of reducing the concentration by withdrawing some of the aircraft from forward deployment was inversely proportionate to the lead time required for implementing the air-strike plan. The JCS was inclined in favor of caution, and on 22 October CINCLANT was therefore authorized to reduce his readiness posture to execute OPLAN 312 from the then prevailing 6-hour reaction time to a 12-hour reaction time, in order to permit dispersing of aircraft if he so chose.

799. Although both CINCAFLANT and CINCLANT questioned the advisability of dispersal,¹ concern over aircraft concentration nevertheless continued, and on 24 October the Chairman, JCS, requested CINCLANT to consider the feasibility of dispersing half the aircraft but without affecting the 12-hour reaction time. The Chairman's query was confirmed the same day in a JCS message formally requesting CINCLANT's estimate of the impact on his 12-hour readiness capability to implement OPLAN 312 if his presently deployed forces in forward areas were reduced by 50 percent.² CINCLANT replied early the next morning, again strongly objecting to the proposal, stating that such a reduction would seriously degrade his readiness capability to meet the 12-hour reaction time.³ CINCLANT remained adamant, reiterating his position the next day and again on 27 October, even to the extent of implying that under such a handicap he might not be able to fulfill the air-strike mission regardless of time frame.⁴ The upshot was that such large-scale dispersal was not put into effect and the 12-hour reaction time for OPLAN 312 was retained until the crisis began to unwind. In the interim, of course,]

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 222150Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 6963 to CINCLANT (Info CINCAFLANT), 250026Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 251000Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msgs, CINCLANT to JCS, 260430Z and 270250Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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[the special subplans of OPLAN 312 discussed earlier had been evolving, some of them providing for reaction time considerably shorter than 12 hours.

800. Meanwhile, a different kind of problem with reaction times was also occurring in connection with the invasion plan. It will be recalled that early in the crisis, on 17 and 18 October, the concept of OPLAN 316 had been altered to provide for simultaneous airborne and amphibious assaults, along with a general beefing-up of the initial assault force. Apparently it was understood by JCS and LANTCOM line commanders that the new concept was to be cast in an extended time frame of seven-day reaction rather than five. The Service technical staffs seem also to have understood this clearly enough, for on 23 October the Office of the Chief of Transportation had pointed out to the Army War Room that the existing Annex M (Transportation) to OPLAN 316 was outdated by virtue of having been based on a five-day reaction time, whereas current transportation planning now in progress was being oriented to a seven-day reaction time.¹ However, CINCLANT planners and the staffs of subordinate field forces were not fully aware of the new seven-day frame. Certainly, staffs were at least confused on this score, as demonstrated by events described below.]

901. By 24 October the President (and the Secretary of Defense as well) apparently was also somewhat confused about the various reaction times for the several optional courses of military action then under consideration, and desired clarification.²

¹DA ODCSOPS Army War Room Journal (Cuban Crisis), TOP SECRET.

²JCS 2304/83, 25 Oct 62 (Decision on, same date), TOP SECRET.

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The next day, 25 October, the JCS responded, through the Secretary of Defense, to the President's request with a compendium recapitulating the range of options and the respective reaction times for each. They stated that "in order to assure understanding of the timing factors which govern the implementation of military actions related to Cuba," the lead-time required from receipt of an execution order to the actual initiation of the operation ordered was as follows:

a. Low-level reconnaissance of selected targets: reaction time - two hours.

b. Reprisal strike on a single SA-2 site (Special Plan FIRE HOSE): reaction time - two hours.

c. Air strikes against all SA-2 sites (later identified as FULL HOUSE): reaction time - two hours (contingent upon being able to maintain present readiness posture).

d. Full air strikes against Cuban military targets (total OPLAN 312, later identified as RED BLUFT): reaction time - 12 hours.

e. Invasion of Cuba (OPLAN 316): reaction time - initial assaults to commence 7 days after a decision to implement the plan, with all assault and essential support forces ashore within 18 days after the decision (perhaps sooner).

They further advised that invasion planning was concentrating on OPLAN 316 based on a seven-day reaction time; the seven days required to implement it would be utilized for necessary neutralization or elimination of hostile air and ground capability, to which airborne assault forces especially would be vulnerable while in flight.¹

¹Memo, JCS to SecDef, JCSM-821-62, "Timing Factors," 25 Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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802. Two days later, on 27 October, the Chairman, JCS, relayed the text of the above "Timing Factors" compendium in its entirety to CINCLANT in an "Exclusive" message for Admiral Dennison alone, advising the Admiral that "these reaction times have been given to the President as to what he may expect."¹ A week later, on 4 November, the JCS reiterated that these established reaction times "may not be modified except upon JCS recommendation to and approval by higher authority."² The Chairman's 27 October message to CINCLANT should have settled some of the outstanding problems regarding reaction times, but did not.

803. [Despite the codification of "established reaction times" at the JCS level, staff planners at the LANTCOM level and below still labored under an ambivalent five-day/seven-day frame of reference for invasion planning. On 26 October, CG XVIII Airborne Corps called to the attention of CINCARLANT that the posture of Army forces for OPLAN 316 was not oriented to either five- or seven-day reaction time, as some references seemed to indicate, but rather was based on a seven-day reaction time plan only.³ Whereupon CINCARLANT, as CGUSCONARC, apprized the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations of the five-day vs. seven-day problem. He stated that he had requested an estimate from CINCAFLANT regarding the length of time it would take to complete air preparations for implementation of OPLAN 316, to which CINCAFLANT had replied that he could not commit himself to a set time frame but that he opposed any shortening of the]

¹Msg, JCS 7044 to CINCLANT (JCS EXCLUSIVE for Dennison), 271859Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 7227 to CINCLANT (Info CINCAFLANT et al.), 050245Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CG XVIII Corps to CINCARLANT et al., 262025Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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[seven-day period between the commencing of air preparations and the D-day assaults. CGUSCONARC advised that he concurred that a seven-day lead time was a tactical necessity.¹

804. CINCARLANT and CINCLANT staff planners, meanwhile, turned to the JCS for a ruling to resolve the ambiguity. On the same day, 27 October, confirmation was requested of JCS as to whether OPLAN 316 was now the invasion plan, rather than OPLAN 314, and whether it was the seven-day version of OPLAN 316, rather than the five-day. CINCLANT - i.e., his staff - pointed out that planning for the seven-day version was reasonably complete, whereas an entire recomputation of movement tables would be necessary for a five-day version.²

805. At JCS, the Joint Battle Staff, in processing the message above, noted that the Chairman's Exclusive message (JCS 7044) to Admiral Dennison earlier than same day (27 October) had already answered the query regarding the seven-day version of OPLAN 316, but being an "Exclusive" obviously had been closely held and not distributed by CINCLANT to his staff. It was fully a day later, at 1800 hours on 28 October, that the JCS confirmed by secure telephone (KY-9) that the seven-day version of OPLAN 316 was indeed the only currently applicable invasion plan.³ Thus, some 25 hours had elapsed before the LANFCCOM staff's confusion on this point was cleared up.

806. Thereafter, there appeared to be no further question from any quarter that the Cuban invasion plan was CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 with a seven-day reaction time.]

¹DA ODCSOPS Army War Room Journal (Cuban Crisis), TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 272014Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Handwritten marginal annotations entered on JCS hard copy of subject message (CINCLANT 272014Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET)

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807. [The problem of reaction times for OPLAN 312, the air-strike plan, however, was not yet completely settled. On 28 October, and again on 4 November, CINCLANT had informed the JCS of his SHOE BLACK option of 312 (wider range of selective air strikes according to type of target, including SAM sites) as having a reaction time "from within two hours to six hours . . . depending on scale of operations directed."¹ Late on 4 November, the JCS demurred with respect to CINCLANT's flexible two- to six-hour reaction time for SHOE BLACK. The JCS advised that SHOE BLACK and FIRE HOSE (air strike on a single SAM site) as set forth by CINCLANT were "not amenable to precise correlation with targeting as set forth in the established reaction times for Cuban contingency plans given to the Secretary of Defense and the President" on 25 October (see above). However, modification of alert posture would be permitted at CINCLANT's discretion, providing the specified two-hour reaction time were maintained for JCS-designated targets, i.e., SAM sites.² Early the next morning (5 November), CINCLANT amended the reaction times accordingly, directing that FIRE HOSE and FULL HOUSE (a single SA-2 site and all SAM sites, respectively) both be two-hour reaction time, while SHOE BLACK would not include SAM sites and would have a fixed reaction time of six hours.³]

808. [There was also a technical difficulty, expressly of a command and control nature, experienced in connection with reaction times, especially with OPLAN 312. CINCLANT had recommended to the JCS on 28 October that an execution message for OPLANS 312 and 316 be prepositioned with him so as to permit]

¹Msgs, CINCLANT to JCS et al., 281640Z Oct and 042010Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 7227 to CINCLANT (Info CINCPACFLT et al.), 050245Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CINCLANT to CINCPACFLT et al. (Info JCS), 050905Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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[Instant transmitting of the actual order to implement the plans via insecure voice channels.¹ On 31 October, the JCS complied by sending the requested prepositioned execution message.



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¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 282310Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 7131 to CINCLANT, 311404Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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311. [The JCS, on receipt of CINCLANT's message immediately repeated it "Operational Immediate" to the White House (022332Z November). The next day, 3 November, the JCS, responding to CINCLANT's recommendations of the day before, cancelled JCS 7131.]

[Msg, CINCLANT to JCS (Info CINCPACFLT) 021852Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET]
[Ibid.]


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812. Well after the urgency of the immediate military situation had been abated and the crisis was to all practical purposes over, the issue of reaction times was once again revived. Apparently the President was dissatisfied with the best reaction-time readiness posture that the military establishment had been able to achieve during the height of the crisis. On 27 November he directed the Chairman, JCS, to have the JCS undertake a review of all Cuban contingency plans in order to determine ways and means of compressing reaction times.² The same day, the Chairman formally instructed the Director, Joint Staff, to prepare a directive to CINCLANT to provide data for appropriate JCS response to the President.³ J-3 drafted the required message to CINCLANT which was approved by the JCS and sent on 28 November.⁴ CINCLANT was directed to review his Cuban contingency plans and advise JCS of possible modifications for reducing reaction times.⁵ But by this time, 28 November, the whole issue of reaction times was no longer of more than academic relevance to the current Cuban crisis, inasmuch as a general stand-down in readiness posture of forces had already gone into effect and many units were preparing for or were in the process of, redeployment back to their home stations.

¹Msg, JCS 7212 to CINCLANT et al., 031559Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²JCS 2018/520, 27 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³Memo, CJCS to DJS, CM-139-62, "Review of CINCLANT 312, 314, and 316," 27 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴JCS 2018/521, 27 Nov 62 (Decision on, 27 Nov 62), TOP SECRET

⁵Msg, JCS 7570 to CINCLANT, 28 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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I. PROVIDING FOR ADEQUATE FORCE LEVELS

813. An important factor also causing readjustments reflected in changes to contingency plans was force-level commitments. Generally through the crisis the trend was upward, with an increase in size of forces both for OPLANS 312 and 316.

814. [As early as 21 October a substantial addition was made to the planned invasion force. CINCLANT had actually requested the increase almost a month and a half before the crisis, on 9 September, but a decision had not been rendered until now. JCS acceded to CINCLANT's request and approved an added provisional infantry brigade, consisting of two battle groups, for OPLAN 316 forces.¹ The planned troop list was changed accordingly.

815. Over the next three days the scheduled phasing of forces for OPLAN 315 was rearranged in order to provide for maximum combat strength to be brought to bear as soon as possible in the initial assault. On 25 October, CINCLANT, noting the effort to which the initial assault force had already been increased, advised the JCS that three additional infantry battle groups, over and above the force already planned, could now be air-landed on D-day with the XVIII Airborne Corps assault waves. He proposed that OPLAN 315 be changed accordingly.² The next day (26 October) CG XVIII Airborne Corps, as soon as he became aware of CINCLANT's proposal, called CINCARLANT's attention to the fact that the three additional battle groups could not begin arriving in the objective area until D-2, and not all be air-landed on D-day as CINCLANT thought.³ A day later, on 27 October, CINCLANT]

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 091848Z Sep 62; JCS 6821 to CINCLANT, CINCSTRIKE et al., 210704Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to CINCARLANT and CINCAFLANT (Info JCS), 260320Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, CG XVIII Aon Corps to CINCARLANT et al., 262025Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

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[rectified the error, informing JCS that it was not possible to bring in the additional forces on D-day as he had reported.¹

816. Meanwhile, more and more Air Force units for both invasion operations and air strikes were being involved in contingency preparations, either to meet new requirements laid on (such as separate forces for FIRE HOSE) or as a voluntary safety-margin augmentation. Late on 3 November CINCLANT advised the JCS that the total of TAC fighters and troop carrier aircraft now deployed and committed for Cuban operations was considerably in excess of authorized force levels as provided for in OPLANS 312-62 and 316-62. These levels, originally approved in 1961, had been based on the enemy situation as it existed at the time. Progressively since then, the Soviet build-up of Cuban military armaments required proportionate increases in USAF forces to match the improving Cuban capability. By now this increase in allocated USAF forces amounted to the full CONUS resources of TAC. CINCLANT admitted that this might pose problems if a concurrent contingency arose requiring reinforcement of CINCEUR or CINCARIB, but urged that such a "remote possibility" should not prevent allocation of sufficient forces to meet the immediate needs of Cuban operations. Any reduction in these forces "will seriously degrade CINCLANT's ability to carry out mission."²

817. CINCLANT then explained that JCS approval of his concept of operations for employment of forces, as well as added requirements placed on him at JCS direction, were considered to have constituted approval for the allocation of these additional forces. Nevertheless, formal JCS confirmation would be desirable.

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 272014Z Oct 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 040422Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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Therefore, CINCLANT requested that the presently programmed USAF forces for Cuban operations be so confirmed and that appropriate changes in plans be approved as follows:

a. [CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62: amend the original provisions for 17 TAC fighter squadrons to 19; amend the 2-1/3 reconnaissance squadrons to 3-1/2.

b. CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62: amend the original provisions for 14 Air Force Reserve C-119 troop carrier squadrons to 21; amend the 5 C-130 troop carrier squadrons to 7; raise the 17 TAC fighter squadrons to 19 and the 2-1/3 reconnaissance squadrons to 3-1/2, as for OPLAN 312; add a new provision for 2 air refueling squadrons.]

818. The following day, 5 November, JCS confirmed the USAF force level allocated to Cuban contingency operations, as requested, and approved the making of appropriate changes in OPLAN 312 and 316 to reflect this force commitment accordingly. The JCS reserved the right, however, to reallocate and redeploy these forces if contingencies elsewhere so required.² On 7 November, CINCLANT, in separate actions, formally promulgated Change No. 6 to CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 and Change No. 6 to CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62 containing the necessary modifications.³

919. [Perhaps the most significant development with regard to planned force levels occurred on 5 November. Despite the considered professional military view submitted by the JCS to the President the preceding 2 November, that U.S. invasion plans were adequate in concept and means (see above), both the President

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 040422Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 7240 to CINCLANT (Info CSAF et al), 052304Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³Msgs CINCLANT to CINCLANT et al, 070014Z and 070016Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.]

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[and his civilian advisers still felt unsure.- Disconcerting echoes of the lessons learned from the Bay of Pigs experience, and the consequent determination at that time that any future invasion be based on the use of "overwhelming force," were once again uncomfortably poignant.

820. [In a memorandum to the Chairman, JCS, the Secretary of Defense conveyed this feeling of concern over the adequacy of ground forces available for invasion operations. Stating "CINCLANT OPLAN 316 seems thin," the Secretary felt that with the forces presently provided for "we could end up bogged down," because of the size of the problem, enemy equipment, and nationalist fervor of the resistance with which U.S. forces might have to contend; he drew analogies to the experience of the British in the Boer War, the Russians in the Finnish War, and the U.S. in the Korean War. The Secretary, therefore, proposed augmenting 316 forces. Specifically, he wanted more forces from the remaining three divisions that were being held in reserve in CONUS to be committed to the invasion plans, which would be replaced by National Guard divisions called up to reconstitute the strategic reserve. He requested JCS recommendations regarding the number of divisions that should be included in CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62, the number that the CONUS reserve should consist of and the number that should be called to active duty from the National Guard.¹ That same day the JCS accordingly instructed CINCLANT, CINCARLANT, CINCAFLANT, and other CINCS and commands to come to a meeting in Washington on Wednesday, 7 November to discuss these proposals of the Secretary of Defense.²]

¹Memo, SecDef to CJCS, "Additional Forces for CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 (U)," 5 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, JCS 7236 to CINCLANT et al., 051656Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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321. On 7 November, the JCS held the Washington conference, attended by CINCLANT, CINCSAC, CINCONAD, CINCSTRIKE, CINCARLANT, CINCAFLANT, COMATS, and other interested commands or their representatives, to consider the problem of augmentation. It was concluded that the only possible source of augmentation forces was the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), part of the 2nd Armored Division, and two more Marine infantry battalions from the 1st Marine Division on the West Coast. The 4th Infantry division, and the rest of the 2nd Armored Division itself, were excluded from consideration inasmuch as a major portion of their combat equipment was prepositioned in Europe for CINCEUR's augmentation requirements. [It was also agreed that augmentation forces available from the two divisions could not be used to increase the weight of the initial assault force,

[REDACTED] would be saturated; therefore they would have to be follow-on forces or part of the Floating Reserve.] However, it was noted that the two additional Marine infantry battalions from the West Coast could be used to replace the 5th MEB as Guantanamo reinforcement, thereby releasing the 5th MEB for over-the-beach operations (later the two West Coast Marine units were deleted without affecting the new 5th MEB mission). The use of National Guard divisions to reconstitute the CONUS reserve was considered impractical, in the light of training and equipment problems, but their possible use for occupation duty seemed feasible.¹ As a result of the meeting, CINCLANT was directed to prepare by 10 November an outline plan providing for employment of such augmentation forces over and above forces presently programmed for inclusion in OFPLAN 316-62.²

¹Memo for Record (J-3), JCS meeting with CINCLANT et al., 7 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²JCS 2618/511, 13 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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822. The day following the meeting, on 8 November, CGUSCONARC, acting on advice from the Army Chief of Staff, informed the commanders of each CONUS Army -- somewhat prematurely -- that the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and the 2nd Armored Division had been committed to augment CINCLANT OPLAN 316 forces.¹ A retraction was issued the next day, 9 November, when CGUSCONARC cancelled his 8 November message.² The augmentation referred to was still in the proposal stage and no decision on it had yet been made.

823. On 10 November, CINCLANT submitted to the JCS the requested outline plan for employment of the augmentation forces discussed at the JCS-convened meeting of 7 November. Based on the guidelines then laid out, the outline plan, identified as CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 (Augmented), provided for the original concept of operations to be retained in its present form except for the added forces, and contemplated using National Guard forces for postcombat occupation duty to relieve regular assault forces, who could then return to CONUS reserve status. The JCS tentatively adopted the outline as a basis for preparing their response to the Secretary of Defense's query of 5 November.³

824. A few days later, on 16 November, CINCLANT, in an unrelated matter, requested JCS to authorize immediate movement of two more Marine battalion landing teams (BLT's) of the 1st Marine Division from the Pacific Coast in order to augment further the defense of Guantanamo.⁴ CINCLANT's request was disapproved on 24 November, the JCS advising him that further reinforcement of Guantanamo was

¹Msg, CGUSCONARC to First Army et al., 082330Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.
DA ODCSOPS Army War Room Journal (Cuban Crisis), TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CG USCONARC to First Army et al., 091415Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

³CS 2018/511, 13 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 161413Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET; see also JCS 7366 to CINCPAC, 121402Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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not required at that time and, moreover, that under any circumstances Guantanamo reinforcement should not be with BLTs. [The JCS directed CINCLANT, therefore, to modify his OPLAN 316-62 to reflect the above concept, so as to provide now for reinforcing Guantanamo by forces other than the 5th MEB, when and if needed, and save the 5th MEB for over-the-beach operations in Western Cuba.]

825 Meanwhile, on 20 November, the JCS responded to the Secretary of Defense's memorandum of 5 November that had initially raised the augmentation issue. [They advised him that upon reviewing the 316 invasion plan they had concluded that the forces currently provided for therein were "probably adequate" to achieve U.S. national objectives in Cuba, but they also agreed "it would be prudent" to earmark additional forces as a ready reserve for the operation if needed. Explaining that some of the existing CONUS strategic reserve resources had to be ruled out (citing the 4th Infantry Division and part of the 2nd Armored Division, with the reasons therefor), the JCS recommended that the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) and a combat command of the 2nd Armored Division, along with supporting forces, be committed to CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 augmentation, but that no movement from home stations be undertaken until directed by JCS. They also pointed out that, in addition, the 5th MEB now in the Caribbean, with a strength of approximately 9000, would be available for invasion assault operations rather than for Guantanamo defense.]

826 With respect to the proposed use of National Guard forces, the JCS recommended to the Secretary that, although the augmenting of OPLAN 316 forces would virtually deplete the CONUS strategic

¹Msg, JCS 7548 to CINCLANT, 242115Z Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

²Memo, JCS to SecDef, JCSCM-913-62, "Additional Forces for CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 (U)," 20 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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reserve, no National Guard divisions should be called to active duty to reconstitute it; in any event only one National Guard division could be combat-equipped from resources available in CONUS. [Instead, they recommended that two National Guard divisions for occupation duty be alerted when OPLAN 316 was implemented and that the timing of their actual mobilization be phased according to the progress of combat operations in Cuba. Finally, the JCS advised the Secretary that the increased Army and Marine forces would require considerable additional lift capacity, specifically 16 more transports, 68 cargo ships and 11 LSTs. They therefore recommended that measures be taken to insure the availability of the transport and cargo ships when needed, but that the LSTs be obtained immediately by reactivating 11 of them from the Reserve Fleet.]

827. This marked the high-water mark in the force-level commitment for planned Cuban operations. [It had practically exhausted the CONUS-based strategic reserves, leaving a residual force of only 1-2/3 Army divisions, which were themselves already precommitted to fill other contingency requirements elsewhere. TAC resources in CONUS were even more fully committed, while the Marine Corps was down to little more than the training battalions at its East and West Coast bases. Shortly, however, before the augmentation could be formalized much beyond "air-marking," or before the units involved could be operationally affected to any great extent, the whole problem of force-level considerations was overtaken by events.] By the latter part of November the military urgency of the crisis had ebbed, readiness posture was already being relaxed, and the likelihood of launching an invasion receding.

¹Memo, JCS to SecDef, JCSM-913-62, "Additional Forces for CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62 (U)," 20 Nov 62, TOP SECRET.

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J. SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

828. Contingency planning addressed itself to only one of the military dimensions of the Cuban crisis. Overshadowing, in one respect, were the more serious competing demands of the general war dimension affecting generation of SIOP forces, and in another, the actual quarantine operations that were carried out in conjunction with diplomatic measures; in a sense, even defense of territorial CONUS had precedence. Nevertheless, because the contingency plans pertained to the immediate issue and locus of the situation around which the entire crisis revolved -- i.e., presence of the offensive threat on the island of Cuba -- they were central to the total U.S. response. Preoccupied with them, accordingly, were the civilian national decision-making authority, higher military command echelons, and a major portion of the operational forces of the military establishment that would be affected.

829. Fundamentally, the contingency plans constituted at once a technique and an instrument of command and control for generating, bringing into rational concert, and regulating the synthesis of all of the myriad elements organic to an enterprise of such magnitude and complexity as military action against Cuba. Throughout, the emphasis on command and control was a dominant and pervasive influence. Derived in the first instance from the larger strategic purpose and context of the plans as a whole, it impinged upon and was reflected in the plans directly, setting in motion much of the planning activity, defining the character of what would be done, determining how, by whom, and when, and even stipulating the content of many of the provisions. Demonstrated in the experience, moreover, were command and control phenomena unique to the contingency planning function itself.

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830. Contingency planning witnessed no abrupt break or sudden metamorphosis in character following the aerial reconnaissance photographs of 14 October that precipitated the crisis. The planning that had been undertaken prior to the crisis and the planning that went on during it proved to be of one continuum. Indeed there were radical substantive departures in certain regards, both in the form of revisions and additions, but essentially the same conceptual approach was retained as before. Planning continued to be in terms of two types of contingency operations -- air strikes and invasion. Whatever extensive modification did occur, moreover, was made incrementally over time. The significant difference was in degree rather than in kind. It was manifest in the accelerated pace of planning under the compelling urgency of the situation at hand, and in the multiplicity and variety of alterations that concrete military circumstances or the subtle complexities of policy and strategy considerations required.

831. The dominant factors shaping the character of contingency plans were:

- a. Military assessments of the intrinsic military situation in Cuba,
- b. Civilian decision makers' appraisals of the Cuban military situation and evaluations of its operational significance,
- c. Policy and strategy requirements, as interpreted by the national decision-making authority, and
- d. Finite limits to the military resources and capabilities effectively available for Cuban operations.

The fluctuating interplay among these four factors, since the relative weight of each varied at different times, might itself be considered an additional factor influencing contingency planning.

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823. The two contingency plans that became the applicable ones were not in an approved status when the crisis first broke. The basic plan governing air-strike operations was approved relatively quickly, but settling upon a basic operational plan for invasion and getting it approved was a time-consuming process. In the interim, the absence of, or ambivalence in, key planning terms of reference resulted in considerable confusion.

833. In part, the difficulty lay in the functioning of the contingency planning system itself, which made for an element of built-in ambiguity. Approval seemed to be a random process. There were no unequivocal criteria for determining whether a planning item was approved or not. A given basic plan -- or a component -- could officially be in existence on one of four different levels of approval:

- a. Approved as a "concept" of a proposed plan.
- b. Approved as an "outline plan."
- c. Approved "for planning purposes only."
- d. Approved as an "operation plan" for implementation when directed.

The plans, or individual portions of them, did not necessarily have to go through each of these four stages in sequence. Throughout the crisis, various parts of the contingency air-strike and invasion plans enjoyed one or another of these different levels of approval. A few provisions never formally received official approval on any level, but were ostensibly accepted as though integral to an approved "operation plan."

834. Another source of difficulty was the extreme security sensitivity attached to planning activity during the crucial first ten days of the crisis. Whatever its original justification, the denial of timely information regarding planning developments to all those having a functional need to know worked a serious hardship on staff personnel within the OJCS as well as on planners

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and operators in the field. It was especially acute in relation to the approving of plans. [In the case of the invasion plan, use of the "Exclusive For" device in message addressing prevented adequately broad dissemination of explicit notification as to which particular basic plan had been decided upon, and served to prolong the confusion already associated with the term "approved." Precisely which invasion plan had been adopted was not clearly understood by all concerned until well after the crisis had reached and passed a climax and was apparently on its way to being resolved without recourse to military hostilities.]

836 A marked feature of Cuban contingency planning was that it was a dynamic on-going process. Despite the coming of the crisis having thrust the content of the planning from the realm of hypothesis into the reality of the here and now, planning requirements rather than being narrowed and simplified thereby, were expanded and made more intricate. Precisely because the plans were never implemented, yet had to keep adjusting to the vicissitudes of events and needs, they never achieved final form but were constantly in transitional growth. At no point could they have been said to be complete; at least some aspect was always in flux, either being initially formulated or undergoing transformation. As a consequence, the contingency plans progressively grew in dimension and detail.

837 Some of the planning developments were internally generated within the military establishment. Among these were the changes that effected a consolidation of tactical command structure to centralize control over the planned contingency operations. By far most of the motivation for planning activity, however, came from outside, emanating from a political source at the very apex of the command and control pyramid. As in other crisis-related activity, the national decision-making authority injected

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itself whenever it chose into the contingency planning machinery , and laid down the governing terms of reference or stipulated specific provisions to be incorporated into the plans. Indirectly, even the rationale for modification of command relations can be traced ultimately to the same source. [Certainly the impetus for augmentation of force level commitment, [REDACTED] and for reducing reaction times was given at the highest civilian executive echelon.]

837. In this larger environment, the command and control processes operative in military contingency planning tended to be ad hoc rather than institutionalized. Although these processes did not follow consistently a formally established organizational or procedural scheme, nor comply with a systematic body of doctrine, there were certain general patterns apparent. The genesis of important planning developments during the crisis was characteristically at the national decision level, the White House usually being the prime mover, while the substantive planning was actually performed on the CINCLANT level, often at the Service component echelon. The JCS planning role thus was frequently that of passive intermediary between planning principals -- the political authority whose requirement initiated planning action and the tactical force commander concerned who did the operational planning. Typically in such an agent capacity the JCS merely conveyed the planning requirements received from the Executive Office or Secretary of Defense, often without any evident amplification or further guidance, directly to CINCLANT (who in turn might sometimes delegate them to a subordinate commander), then passed CINCLANT's responses back to the originator with little amendment. The chief JCS function in these instances was follow-through staffing, to coordinate and monitor all the planning action precipitated

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by any particular requirement. It was the Cuban Planners of J-3 upon whom this monitoring responsibility devolved. In short, the military contingency planning function did not constitute a "system" in the proper sense of the term, but consisted of a series of discrete responses to explicit external requirements.

838. There was generally a positive correlation between elapsed time and scale of force commitment. Progressively during the life span of the crisis (and even beyond) the trend was upward, with the size of the planned force commitment ever expanding.

839. The tendency was to a large extent a normal rectification of the original underestimated force requirements resulting from appraisal of the enemy situation as it had existed earlier in 1961, which now had to take into account reassessments reflecting a greatly improved Cuban military capability. But to some extent the tendency to keep raising the level of force commitment was less directly related to conventional order-of-battle intelligence factors. Passage of time alone allowed the luxury of giving consideration to some of the more peripheral operational requirements attending or flowing from implementation of the plans, and it also invited the making of new provisions to accommodate some of the more remote possibilities that developments could conceivably take.

840 Perhaps most important, however, was the desire on both operational and policy levels to ensure adequate safety margins. The Bay of Pigs had cast a long shadow, and everyone was pre-disposed to have enough forces this time "just in case." Tactical commanders were inclined to add, on their own initiative, extra combat strength in excess of that authorized in plans when they deployed their forces, while top national decision makers went further and formally directed large-scale augmentation of the planned force commitment, even in the face of military advice to the contrary.

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841. The cumulative effect of these various incentives was a steady qualitative and quantitative increase over time in the total magnitude of force available for planned Cuban contingency operations. By the time the crisis had run its course the increases in the planned commitment had exhausted the force resources on hand and affected a significant portion of the reserves.

842. Neither of the two contingency plans was a self-contained quantum that, if ordered executed, would inexorably be carried out in toto. Many provisions were never intended to be automatically implemented in due course, but were contingent upon being expressly so directed at the time by decision of higher authority. These conditional or reserved provisions in effect constituted yet another order of contingency planning over and above the contingency plans proper.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In the case of the air-strike plan, implementation was elaborately qualified so as to apply to individual portions, all codified according to scale and type of operation. Only that increment specified would be carried out and no more. The substance of other provisions, such as some of those pertaining to civil affairs matters, for example, was by design unspecified and deliberately left open-ended, simply because it could not be determined beforehand but would depend upon the course of unfolding events once operations actually began.

843. [A large share of the problems encountered in contingency planning for the Cuban crisis arose precisely as a result of efforts to respond to exacting command and control demands of national decision-making authority. Foremost and most persistent]

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[was the problem with reaction times in conjunction with discriminate magnitude of force application. All of the changes attending definition of selective options and minimization of their respective lead-times came into being because of Presidential insistence on as close as possible to instantaneous execution capability to carry out, on order, predetermined operational courses of action in specified kind and measure -- at his discretion as the nation's Commander-in-Chief. The main vehicles of command and control for realizing this decision flexibility were the contingency plans.]

844. [The degree to which these national command and control desiderata were satisfied during the Cuban crisis is unprecedented. As provided for in contingency plans, a major airborne and amphibious invasion would have been under way seven days after a national decision to implement CINCLANT OPLAN 316-62. For the FIRE HOSE option of CINCLANT OPLAN 312-62, at one point in the crisis the time lag between the President's "Execute" and TAC's "bombs on target" would have been something less than one hour; over a sustained period it would have been under three hours. About the same reaction time was provided for in the even more ambitious FULL HOUSE option of the plan.] Such fine-grained choices among military alternatives by the political decision-making authority had never before been approached.]

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VIII. TERMINATION OF THE CRISIS

845. One characteristic of military activities during a crisis is that they often tend to develop a momentum of their own which compels them to continue after the political circumstances which spawned them have been resolved or ceased to exist. Cuba was generally a notable exception, despite the scale of military operations. Once the political crisis had started down toward resolution, U.S. military activity kept pace with it. Readiness was gradually reduced and forces dispersed piecemeal. To be sure, part of this process was compulsory, the result of the inexorable pressure of maintenance and training needs. At the same time the military stand-down, in step-by-step phasing with the progressive political easing of tensions, helped to achieve the political objective of portraying the U.S. as willing to settle the problem peacefully but ever ready to revert to military means if necessary,

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A. POLITICAL RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS

345. As with the U.S. military deployments, the political resolution of the Cuban crisis fell into two phases. The first ended with the Soviet concession on October 28, and was characterized by an essentially exclusive exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Once the Soviet agreement to withdraw the missiles had been achieved in principle, the next phase, extending from October 28 to November 20, involved the efforts and negotiations to ensure that the Soviet commitment was carried out. During this period participation in the negotiations broadened to include the Cubans, the United Nations, and even the International Red Cross.

347. The copy of the President's address of the 22nd that was transmitted to the Soviets was accompanied by a personal message to Premier Khrushchev. In it the President stated that he wished Khrushchev to know immediately and accurately the position of the U.S. in this matter, emphasizing that in various U.S.-Soviet discussions he had always feared that the Soviet leaders would not understand the will and determination of the U.S. He recalled that at Vienna he had told the Premier that the U.S. would not tolerate any Soviet action which in a major way disturbed the existing balance of power. He further stressed that the U.S. action now being taken was the minimum necessary, but that the Soviets should not thereby make any misjudgment.¹

¹State message 961, October 22, 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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848. The official Soviet reaction came on the 23rd in a formal note which denied that the arms in Cuba were offensive in character. It was a relatively mild and obviously hesitant reply. Khrushchev also sent a private letter to the President, rejecting both the U.S. claims and the "interference with sovereign rights," but the tone of the letter was similarly restrained.¹

849. The President immediately acknowledged the Russian letter with a brief message, saying that he was concerned that both leaders show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult than it already was.²

850. On the same day the U.S. quarantine went into effect, and the U.S. resolution defending the American actions was presented in the U.N. The OAS supported the U.S. action in a meeting of its own. Throughout the world there was a marked absence of positive Soviet or Bloc reaction. There were press attacks aplenty but no military moves. Bloc military alerts were called without fanfare and readiness increased, but these were defensive moves. Both CINCPAC and CINCEUR reported no indications that the Bloc was preparing to initiate hostilities in their theaters and, especially important, no incidents occurred in super-sensitive Berlin.

851. Late on the 23rd came the first really hopeful sign when some of the Soviet Bloc ships heading to Cuba were seen to have changed course. Additionally, the reply from Khrushchev to a letter from Lord Russell, the British philosopher and pacifist who had introduced himself into the crisis, was moderate and promised that the Soviets would do nothing rash.

¹State Message 1042, October 23, 1962, SECRET.

²State Message 985, October 23, 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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832. The U.S. for its part, was making every effort to keep the crisis concentrated in the Caribbean. U.S. forces in Europe remained at low alert posture. A formal but not hostile message was sent via the Secretary of State to Moscow, detailing the procedures "unidentified" submarines should follow when challenged by U.S. naval forces. U.S. attaches in Moscow were ordered to continue to register for travel within the USSR, both for collection of indications information and to avoid giving the Soviets cause for viewing the absence of travel requests as a further indicator of possible hostile U.S. action.¹ B1 A5

833. The Secretary General of the U.N. personally intervened on the 24th, urgently appealing to the U.S. and the Soviets to suspend, respectively, the quarantine and the shipment of arms for a period of two or three weeks. The Soviets accepted the proposal the next day, but the U.S. neither refused nor accepted, emphasizing that the only answer to the crisis lay in the removal of the weapons from Cuba. The U.N. initiative was obviously unwelcome in Washington, since it offered the Soviets a potential chance to gain time.

834. Another private letter from the President to Khrushchev the next day restated the thesis that the Soviets had issued the first challenge, despite numerous pledges not to send offensive weapons to Cuba.²

¹Msg, DNI to ALUSNA, Moscow 241319Z October 1962, SECRET.

²DAIN 280236, October 25, 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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855. The Soviet reply in the U.N. to the U.S. resolution on the same day further reflected a Soviet desire to avoid the appearance of a direct confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The approach seemed calculated to create a climate for the U.S. reversal of the quarantine, to diminish the threat to the U.S., and to reduce growing tension among the Bloc nations. Reports from U.S. and Allied diplomats and military attaches in Bloc countries confirmed this nervousness.

856. Late in the evening of the 27th Khrushchev replied to the President's message of the same day in a letter which sounded very reasonable and sincere in its apparent candor. However, he stated that Soviet merchant ships would ignore quarantine instructions and that the Soviet Union would protect its shipping.¹ Since Soviet shipping had already begun to turn back in large numbers, the threat was viewed as primarily verbal.

857 At the same time, in the Caribbean, major Soviet submarine activity became apparent. The extent of these operations was considered significant in that plans must have been made well in advance of the current crisis and the submarines themselves deployed not later than the first week in October.

858 The 25th closed with a number of hopeful signs to its credit, all evidencing a Soviet desire to play down the crisis and to avoid a high seas confrontation. On the other hand, aerial reconnaissance of Cuba indicated

¹DAIN 280090, October 25, 1962, SECRET.

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that construction was continuing at the missile sites and hurried efforts at camouflage were being undertaken.

The White House announced this fact the next day in a statement notable for its ominous overtones, suggesting forceful action in the fairly near future. While the attention of the world was riveted on a possible confrontation at sea, the Soviet actions with regard to the missile sites were far more critical. No incident on the quarantine line could be as serious, or as clearly an indication of Soviet intentions, as their actions now in regard to the missile sites. These were the real potential casus belli.

859. By the morning of the 27th all 24 SAM sites appeared to be operational, along with three of the six surface-to-surface missile sites. Of the six MREM sites and three IREM sites under construction, seven had four erectors in place at each site. Five nuclear assembly storage areas had been identified. B1A4

350. However, on the 26th both the U.S. and Soviet Union responded to a new appeal from the U.N. Secretary General, the Soviets agreeing to keep their ships away from Cuba for the next few days and the President promising that he would "try to avoid any direct confrontation at sea." The day also brought a very long private letter from Khrushchev to the President. It was moderate and reasonable, but vague and troubled and clearly tinged with fear. The Premier

¹JCS Cuba Supplemental SITREP #6, 252000Z October 1962,
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²JCS Cuba Supplemental SITREP #9, 271200Z October 1962
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stressed that Soviet leaders were rational and reasonable people, and he called for a joint effort to solve the crisis peaceably. For the first time the Soviet leader gave in print a clear indication of a Soviet willingness to withdraw its weapons.¹

101. On the 27th Khrushchev sent another long message to the President, this time made public in a Moscow broadcast, proposing that the Soviets dismantle their Cuban missile bases and withdraw their jet bombers, if the U.S. did likewise in Turkey. The letter seemed patently an attempt to rescue something from the wreckage of Soviet policy, and in his reply the same day, the President simply ignored the morning Soviet message. Instead he based his reply upon the Khrushchev letter of the 26th, reading much into it which was veiled or merely hinted at in the letter. The President stated that the Khrushchev letter contained 'proposals' which seemed generally acceptable, i.e., that the Soviets would dismantle its bases and remove its offensive weapons under U.N. supervision, and would halt further shipment of such weapons, in exchange for which the U.S. would halt the quarantine and pledge not to invade Cuba.

102. A White House communique issued shortly after the President's message implicitly dealt with the Soviet suggestion of a Cuba-Turkey deal, rejecting such a deal as totally irrelevant.

103. That afternoon the only U.S. combat loss of the crisis occurred when a U-2 disappeared over Cuba, a victim of the Soviet SAM's. It was unknown for several days just how the plane was lost, but plans were immediately laid to ensure

State Message 1101, October 26, 1962, SECRET.

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that reconnaissance flights were protected and that further losses would bring prompt retaliation.

25. The close of the first phase of the political resolution of the crisis came with the Khrushchev message, broadcast over the Moscow domestic news service, at 1400Z on the 28th, accepting the terms of the President's last message, namely, dismantling of the bases and return of the equipment to the Soviet Union, under U.N. supervision. The Russian note made no reference to the suggested Cuba-Turkey deal. In answer, the President issued a statement welcoming the Soviet decision, pointedly adding that developments were approaching a point where events could have become unmanageable.

26. Castro appeared on stage at this point with a list of five demands on the U.S., in return for which he would agree to the suspension of missile site construction. These demands caused some concern during the next two weeks as a possible stumbling block to the U.S.-Soviet negotiations, but never really became the subject of serious negotiation. The U.S. continued to deal only with the Soviets.

27. The U.N. Secretary General flew to Havana on the 30th to confer for two days with the Cubans, and during this period the U.S. lifted the quarantine and suspended aerial surveillance. However, on his return the following day, the Secretary General could only say he had been informed that the missile sites were being dismantled. It was obvious that the Cubans had rejected any U.N. supervision and were sticking to their five demands. Moscow entered

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the impasse by sending its First Deputy Premier Mikoyan to Cuba, but Castro on November 1 openly rejected any international inspection, including that by the Swiss International Red Cross Committee as had been suggested by the Soviets as an alternative to the U.N.

867. As to the dismantling of the missiles themselves there was some concern generated by reports to the JCS that initial photo interpretation of pictures taken by reconnaissance flights on the 29th indicated that work was still in progress at the missile sites. However, further reconnaissance changed the view, and the President was able to announce on November 2 that the bases were being dismantled and the missiles crated.

868. On the 4th the issue of the IL-28's became acute, since photographic evidence revealed that there had been no reduction in the number of bombers and that these were still being uncased and assembled. The U.S. warned that the crisis could again become critical if these planes were turned over to the Cubans. This point remained the key issue during the remainder of the crisis, although the U.S. still clung, at least publicly, to its demand for a verification system. However, with each passing week, the likelihood of achieving this goal seemed to grow more remote. Not only did the Soviets employ delaying tactics in discussing the problem, but the U.S. acquiescence in simply a "close-in-lock" at the missiles being carried out of Cuba by Soviet ships tended to degrade heavily the U.S. claim that an on-site inspection system was necessary.

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859. The Swiss International Committee of the Red Cross, an alternative to the U.N. inspection which Castro had rejected, had obviously had second thoughts, too. Despite the Soviet's proposal to use the organization in this capacity, and the U.S. willingness to accept, the Swiss organization withdrew itself from the situation on November 13 by refusing to accept any role.

870. This left only aerial reconnaissance as the sole U.S. means of verification, but on the 15th Castro threatened to shoot down U.S. reconnaissance aircraft as he had the U-2 that had disappeared on October 27. Consequently, the U.S. again promised swift retaliation, and reconnaissance flights continued.

871. Obviously the Soviet representative was bringing pressure on Castro to consent to removal of the bombers which Castro had claimed were Cuban property, unlike the missiles which had remained Soviet. At the same time the Soviet Union was at least publicly backing Castro's five claims against the U.S. However, suddenly on November 19 Castro informed the U.N. Secretary General that Cuba would not object if the Soviet Union removed the IL-28's. The next day Khrushchev informed the President that all the bombers would be withdrawn within thirty days.

872. The U.S. objectives had been achieved, although without the type of inspection and verification the U.S. had at first demanded. Therefore, the President ordered the quarantine lifted on the 20th, and the major political phase of the Cuban crisis came to a close, although negotiations for inspection dragged on inconclusively and finally came to a gradual end in December.¹

¹ For fuller treatment of the problem of verification, see the chapter on The Naval Quarantine.

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B. MILITARY ADJUSTMENT TO THE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

873. The Soviet concession of October 28 came at a time when pressures were mounting for some decisive and forceful military action, and this action may indeed have been only hours away when the Soviets announced their willingness to withdraw. From the earliest indications of Soviet caution and hesitation, as evidenced in the turnabout of Soviet ships on the 23rd, the U.S. high command had been faced with two conflicting tendencies. One was to go slowly so as to give the Soviets time to withdraw. This meant accepting the evidences of Soviet caution and hesitation as such. The other pressure came from evidence that the Soviets, despite their political indications of caution, were nevertheless continuing to prepare the missile sites with the obvious intention of making them operational as soon as possible.

874. Thus, the desire of the U.S. political authorities for a political resolution of the crisis had to be balanced against the unchanged and, indeed by the 28th, apparently increasing threat. The JCS at this moment were in favor of direct military action. [They had recommended to the Secretary of Defense very early on the 28th that because of the continuing build-up in Cuba, CINCLANT OPLAN 312 be executed no later than Monday morning, October 29, unless there were irrefutable evidence in the meantime that the offensive weapons were being dismantled or rendered inoperable. They also recommended that CINCLANT OPLAN 316 be executed seven days afterward.¹ Their attitude was that the only sure way to eliminate the threat was by direct attack, and that in the long run this was the best course of action.²]

¹JCSM-844-62, 28 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCSM-831-62, 28 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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875. [The Chairman, however, dissented and in transmitting the recommendation for the Monday dawn strike stated to the Secretary that he had not participated in the JCS discussion leading to the recommendation. His duties as the military member of the Executive Committee over at the White House had kept him there. He had, however, read these same recommendations to the Executive Committee of the NSC the day before, October 27, including his disagreement. His position was that the U.S. should await further evidence of Soviet/Cuban reaction before taking the irrevocable step, while still maintaining continuous readiness to execute the plans.]¹

876. The first JCS reaction to news of the Soviet concession Sunday the 28th was one of caution. Their opinion was that the Soviet proposal might well be an insincere effort to gain time, and therefore there should be no relaxation of alert procedures.² The JCS SITREP of that day analyzed the Khrushchev message and delineated its pitfalls, pointing out how the apparent concession could be utilized by the Soviets as a means to confuse the situation and weaken the U.S. position.³

877. The suspicion remained alive several more days until positive evidence of the dismantling of the bases was received. In fact, on the 30th CINCLANT forwarded to the JCS a message to him from CINCPACFLT, stating that initial examination of aerial photos taken on the 29th showed no evidence that the Soviets had as yet closed work on the sites, and that they seemed to be moving ahead as rapidly as possible in an all-out effort to get the sites operational. The dispersion and camouflage efforts being

¹CM-61-62, 28 October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Msg 7065 to CINCLANT, CINCONAD, CINCSAC, 281556Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³JCS Cuba supplementary SITREP 12, 282100Z October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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undertaken, warned CINCPACFLT, meant that there might be only a few more days left in which the sites could be attacked with full assurance of success. He recommended ultimately a selective attack and reattack, but immediately urged a massive reconnaissance effort.¹

878. This large-scale, low-level reconnaissance effort was begun and evidence of the site dismantling was shortly found.

879. The Soviet concession, however, on the whole brought about an immediate lowering of tension. The sense of urgency seemed to leave the crisis, and while, as will be seen, U.S. forces remained alert for another month, the pressures of the latter period never equaled those of the first ten days.

C. DISMANTLING THE MILITARY BUILD-UP

880. The second phase of the crisis, just as the first, involved two contradictory trends. On the one hand was the feeling that the new period of political maneuver could provide a valuable opportunity to push ahead in the refining of plans and the increasing of contingency force readiness in case political negotiations failed to achieve the U.S. objective. On the other was the development very soon of the requirement to lower the readiness posture of some forces in response to the inevitable demands of maintenance, training and personnel morale.

881. The JCS took cognizance of the by now general problem of necessary stand down on November 6 when it notified CINCPACFLT, CINCSAC, CINCPACFLT, and CINCPACFLT of a meeting to be held in Washington the next day. [The three subjects]

¹Msg, CINCPACFLT to JCS, 301344Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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[to be discussed were the need for augmentation of the OPLAN 316 assault forces; the length of time their forces could maintain their present alert posture without significant degradation of combat capability (the date of November 15 was given as an approximate time for some degree of stand-down if there were no definite indications that OPLANS 312 and 316 would be executed); the propriety of rescheduling a large training exercise with the participation of the forces which had been assembled, while the period of high level of concentration still continued.]

882. Much earlier, however, the pressure for some sort of stand-down had begun. CINCONAD on the 29th had requested permission to return his fighters from their dispersal bases to home stations, except for the 32nd Region, emphasizing that the overall readiness to execute the general war mission would be enhanced by the opportunity to recycle weapons and check out and maintain aircraft.² The JCS concurred only in a partial reduction of CINCONAD's force dispersal at that time.³ The sharp sense of relaxation which occurred is well illustrated by CINCONAD's case. Until the moment of the Soviet concession he had been making repeated requests for major augmentation of the air defenses of the southeast U.S., only to swing abruptly around and be the first to request some degree of stand-down. To be sure, CINCONAD's problem was primarily a general war one, and his role in the event of Cuban operations was not expected to be a major one. Therefore, with a first reduction of tension in the contingency area, CINCONAD doubtless seized

¹Msg, JCS 724, to CINCLANT, 061710Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.
Msg, JCS 7248 to CINCSAC, CINCONAD, CINCSSTRIKE, 061711Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCONAD to JCS, 291820Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, JCS 7091 to CINCONAD, 292206Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

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the opportunity to improve his major mission readiness. It should be recalled that CINCONAD's general war preparations had been disrupted somewhat by the necessity to augment the air defenses of the southeast U.S.

883.



884. The first relaxation in readiness posture came on Nov. 14 when the JCS cancelled MINIMIZE for all areas except LANFOM and CARIECOM.³

885. The JCS met with the President on November 16 and reported on the readiness status of forces involved in the Cuban contingency plans. The memorandum they gave the President is a succinct summation of the readiness peak reached, although, in fact, the peak had already been passed two weeks earlier, as the preceding paragraphs have shown. By November 16 stand-downs had already occurred in a number of spots. The memo therefore portrayed a posture that really no longer exactly existed.

¹Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 302232Z, October 1962, TOP SECRET.

²Msg, CINCLANT to JCS, 130138Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

³Msg, JCS 7391 to all CINCs, 142318Z, November 1962, CONFIDENTIAL.

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- (1) 312 - 2 days
(2) 316 - 10 to 12 days (5th MEB and organic shipping excepted).¹

890. The JCS recommended staying in the present posture for the immediate future. All commanders were therefore ordered to maintain the readiness posture quoted in the memo until otherwise advised.¹

890. [CINCLANT was authorized to conduct Exercises SUNSHADE, five exercises rehearsing the airborne phase of OPLAN 316, and involving the airborne divisions. However, the JCS warned him that each exercise would have to be evaluated to ensure that no real degradation of readiness to conduct 316 resulted.]

891. Within three days the situation changed. The quarantine was lifted, following the Soviet promise to remove the IL-28's, and CINCLANT was ordered to return all LANTFLT ships to home ports and normal operating areas at his discretion. He was instructed to keep one CVA with air group ready in the Mayport-Caribbean area.³

892. [The JCS sought the opinion of CINCONAD, CINCSAC, and CINCLANT the next day on recommended readiness levels to maintain a reaction time of 72 hours for OPLAN 312 and two weeks for 316. The various options of 312 and BLUE MOON reconnaissance requirements were also given longer suggested reaction times.]

¹Msg, JCS 7441 to CINCONAD, CINCLANT, CINCSAC, 172324Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET

²Msg, JCS 7421 to CINCLANT, CSAF, 161937Z, November 1962, SECRET.

³Msg, JCS 7476 to CINCLANT, 202345Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

⁴Msg, JCS 7493 to CINCLANT, CINCSAC, CINCONAD, 211803Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

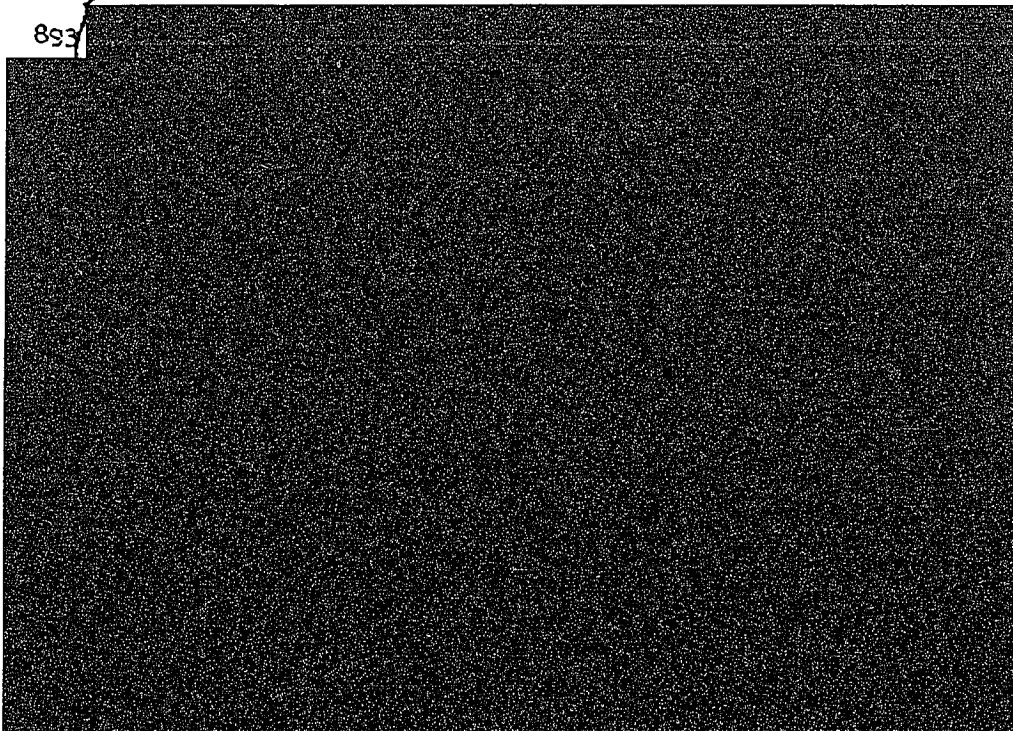
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844. The final wind-up of the crisis machinery was recommended to the Secretary of Defense in a memorandum of November 28. It pointed out that the new phase of the situation was marked by the termination of the 1/8 airborne alert (November 20), the return of the B-47's to their home bases (November 24), except for those in Florida, the authorization to all commands to return to DEFCON 5, the release of the Air Force Reserve Troop Carrier Units, the return to normal operations of all naval forces and air squadrons associated with the quarantine. Recognizing the need for continued reconnaissance, as well as maintenance and the problem of personnel hardship, the JCS recommended new reaction times with further reduction to a normal

¹Msg, JCS to all CINCs, 272124Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

²JCS Cuba SITREP 37-62, 280500Z, November 1962, TOP SECRET.

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[pre-Cuba posture prior to Christmas, contingent upon the actual Soviet withdrawal of the IL-28's. Tires were again spelled out for the various reconnaissance missions and the options of 312. OPLAN 312 itself was set at a 72-hour reaction time and 316 at 18 days. All air defense units would resume normal posture except units needed for permanent augmentation of the southeast U.S.]

895. Authority was requested to return all West Coast Marine units and all but a few small Army units to home stations immediately. The objective was to be the return of all units to home posts by Christmas, including the return of dependents to Guantanamo.

896. The memorandum was approved by the Secretary of Defense, and all commanders were requested to implement it with respect to the units assigned to their operational control ¹

897. With this order, to all intents and purposes, the military phase of the Cuban crisis came to an end. Both offensive and defensive machinery was in the process of dismantlement. Reconnaissance of Cuba continued and the inspection of outgoing Soviet ships carrying the IL-28's had still to be conducted, but the largest peacetime marshaling and deployment of U.S. forces rapidly became history.

1sg, JCS 7500 to CINCLANT, 282249Z, November 1962,
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